

# Labor Age

**SEPTEMBER, 1932 . . . . . 15 CENTS**

## **Meaning of the Convention**

A. J. MUSTE

## **Revolt of the Illinois Miners**

WM. STOFFELS

## **The Farmers Strike**

ARNOLD SATHER

## **The Negro's Road to Freedom**

ERNEST RICE McKINNEY

## **Stocks Up--Jobs Down**

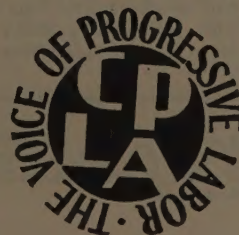
J. C. KENNEDY

## **Storm Over Europe**

J. B. MATTHEWS

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JOHN GODBER



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## NOTICE

## NEW YORK BRANCH

Remember, the next meeting of the branch will be held at 128 East 16th Street on Friday, Sept. 23, 8:30 P. M. sharp.  
No other notice will be given.

## A FEW LEFT

A few of J. C. Kennedy's pamphlet, "Ending the Depression" are still left. You can get this pamphlet, as long as they last, for 5 cents, from

## THE LABOR BOOK SHOP

128 East 16th Street, New York

Enclose 3 cents postage for mailing.

## SHALL WE HAVE A WEEKLY?

Unanimously the CPLA convention voted to raise \$2,500 and publish by January 1 the first issue of a CPLA weekly newspaper. A name, a dummy was submitted. Some \$700 in cash and subscriptions were immediately raised. All was enthusiasm for bringing out LABOR ACTION on schedule.

There still remains, however, the small matter of raising the money. And a small matter it will be if CPLAers are convinced that a CPLA weekly must come to life.

But is there a place for it, is it needed, and how badly?

In Russia there is an organization of two million workers who write regularly to the newspapers. Their letters are published and read everywhere in the Soviet Union. And so from the Russians we get the idea: LABOR ACTION shall have as a regular and very important feature a full page of letters and first-hand reports from workers, covering the conditions and activities of Labor on all fronts.

Here in America and all over the world the workers are now being brought sharply to face the fact that they must move as a class—and they are beginning to move. It is still being said, however, that American workers are "taking it laying down." This is not true today. Big news comes in from the Illinois miners, from unemployed

leagues, from the West Virginia miners, from Southern textile workers and Western farmers. Things are happening. And we get the idea: LABOR ACTION'S job will be to flash these stories of Labor in action back to the workers, and inspire them to carry on.

Equally important in the make-up of the proposed weekly, as planned, will be the editorial section — CPLA's voice, in the language of the workers, to militants and the rank and file for an American movement, for a mass labor party, and for a maximum of unity among all workers.

What do you think of it, what is your answer—will you help make LABOR ACTION a hefty CPLA weapon in the fight?

Then put your name on the dotted line below:

LABOR ACTION—One Dollar a year,  
25 cents for 10 weeks.

I pledge to raise or give \$.....between now and December 1 for LABOR ACTION. I also enclose herewith \$..... for ..... Years subscription to LABOR ACTION. I can handle bundle orders of .....copies.

Signed .....

Address.....

Mail all communications to Labor Action Committee,  
128 East 16th Street, New York City.



# • LABOR • AGE •

VOL. XXI.

September, 1932

No. 9

CINCINNATI'S A.F. of L. convention approaches, and over its sessions already looms the shadow of the gangster and racketeer.

## **"The Labor Racket" Runs Amuck**

In Chicago labor leaders are being killed off or in danger of being killed off like flies by would-be "leaders," who are often former allies. The rule of the strong-arm thug and the more skilled "business" racketeer is strongly entrenched in local after local, and one national union after another.

The officers of the A.F. of L. have declared war against this evil. The Conference for Progressive Labor Action has forced them at least to give lip service to the fight. Along with unemployment insurance, labor racketeering will be a big issue at the Cincinnati meet.

No doubt before that day, a lot of A. F. of L. oratory will be spilt over the gangster and racketeering evils. There is to be a nation-wide series of radio broadcasts about the matter. If these broadcasts get down to the roots of the business, they will be all to the good.

The important question that arises is: What will the A. F. of L. actually do? The last Executive Council session "got hot," according to the newspapers. At the New Jersey State Federation of Labor convention, President Green uttered some harsh words. But up to the present, no names have been mentioned. No fight has been waged upon anybody, to the last ditch. All corruptionists remain in their offices so far as official A. F. of L. action goes. They will have their tools, representatives and themselves in the Cincinnati convention itself.

With the present crisis putting the acid test to every development under Capitalism, the labor racket finds itself in a bad way. Its answer is, to run amuck.

Can those who have complacently allowed it to grow, and who have even allied themselves to it, today clean up the mess? Can those who have kept the union movement enmeshed in the corrupt "non-partisan" policy, today kill this thing that has been fostered by capitalist politicians?

The labor racket goes hand in hand with two other evils: union-management cooperation on the one hand, and "non-partisan" political action on the other. If these policies are continued, the gangster and racketeer will not be wiped out.

We ask again: When will the A.F. of L. give up talking about "leeches" and get down to action? There has been bloodsucking of the workers long enough.

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ON September 3 delegates representing 70 per cent of the miners of Illinois voted to sever connections with the United Mine Workers of America in that state and formed the Progressive Miners Union. That

## **Ups and Downs of Miners**

was but one step as LABOR AGE readers are aware, in a series of efforts to clean out lazy, inefficient, autocratic and corrupt miners' union officials and to rebuild an effective, fighting union for the coal-diggers. The battle is by no means completely won yet.

The contract under which the Illinois miners had been working expired at the end of last March. They demanded the 6-hour day and 5-day week, so as to put a lot of miners back to work, with the same basic wage of \$6.10 a

day. After three months of strike, operators and union officials made an agreement for an 8 hour day and a basic wage of \$5. The miners in a referendum rejected the proposal. The District officials, the John H. Walker crowd, then called in their supposed sworn enemy, John L. Lewis, who went around denouncing miners who voted against the new agreement as reds. Another vote was taken.

Fox Hughes, a Lewis official, stole the ballots when a count of a portion of them had shown that the miners had again voted overwhelmingly against the terms offered. Lewis then declared that an emergency existed and the agreement would be signed. The miners revolted. Elsewhere in this issue the details of that revolt are described.

As usual, the miners who are seeking to clean house are having trouble in Franklin Co. and other southern Illinois fields. There the Peabody Coal Co., connected with those trying to salvage the Insull interests has obtained two big contracts. It is practically forcing miners at the point of guns to dig coal. The most brutal violence has been used against peaceful, unarmed miners from other parts of the state who tried to go down to inform their fellows of what was happening.

The recent CPLA convention sent greetings to the Progressive Miners' Union. Some of its officials such as Wm. Keck, the secretary-treasurer, are known to us as true and tried progressives and militants. As in the past, so now, we pledge our support to every sincere effort to clean house in the miners' union.

Two things the Illinois miners must remember if their long sufferings are not to be in vain. First, it does no good to sweep the dust into a corner or under the piano. It will do no good to build another union like the present U.M.W. of A. The union must have a new philosophy, a new outlook. It must be militant, it must be clean, it must be in the control of the membership, it must be for a labor party.

Second, no district can stand by itself. If Illinois tries to seek its own advantage at the expense of other fields, it will only play into the hands of the big operators who have mines in other states and who will play off the miners in one state against those in another until all of them are in a worse hell than that in which they now find themselves. All the soft coal miners of the country must stand together. Let the Illinois miners move as swiftly as possible toward a national movement which will bring in all the sound elements from West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania and other states. Now is the time!

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**"WHY** has the National Miners Union completely failed to organize and lead determined struggles of the coal miners against the capitalist offensive?" This question is asked by Tom Johnson, N.M.U. organizer, in a revealing article in the August issue of the *Communist*.

## **Why the N.M.U. Has Failed**

"The basic factor in the situation is the isolation of the union from the masses of the miners," declares Mr. Johnson. "Our official unions lead a life of their own entirely separate and apart from the life of the masses. They are so engrossed in their own internal problems and the general campaigns and problems of the revolutionary movement



that they have no time to deal with the problems facing the miners with whom they are in contact."

Condemning the manner in which local meetings are conducted because of the general attitude "We are all close comrades here, there are no 'outsiders,' therefore why worry about such things as meetings that start on time with a regular order of business and are run with discipline according to parliamentary rules," Johnson points out that the miners do want a business-like organization, and declares that "we are only setting up barriers between us and the miners when we use this jargon of 'Agit-prop,' 'Org. Secretary.'" If the miners are used to and want a president, vice-president and secretary-treasurer in their union, "why the devil not have them rather than Org. Secretaries, etc.," asks the writer.

Another weakness of the N.M.U., according to Johnson, is bureaucracy. "The present scandalous situation where we have on the National Board and on various District Boards as far as I know them, not one working miner, must be decisively changed." A principal cause of this weakness, thinks the writer, is "the top-heavy apparatus of paid functionaries." With an average of less than 500 members, asserts Johnson, "our union . . . supports in the principal districts . . . a total of 18 full-time functionaries."

These are excellent criticisms. But do they mean anything? Will the N.M.U. now proceed to correct itself? Or will another writer, a few months hence, come out in the *Communist* with the proud announcement that "We have made the same mistakes in Illinois that we made in Harlan."

After all, this business of self-criticism, no matter how good, gets tiresome after awhile. Confession of error is not an uncommon thing, nor is it a sign of very great wisdom. Let the N.M.U. demonstrate that it can profit by its errors, then, and not until then, will those sincerely interested in building a militant miners union in this country give serious consideration to the self-criticisms of such workers as Tom Johnson. However, recent actions of N.M.U. organizers in West Virginia do not lead one to believe that such time has yet come. We are still convinced that the N.M.U. is much more interested in beautiful and "revolutionary" self-criticisms than in building an honest, militant miners' union.



ONE of the things the typical conservative farmer holds against workers and the labor movement is strikes. He thinks of them as radical, against law and order and so on. Now thousands of farmers in such typically conservative farmer states as Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wisconsin, are themselves on strike. They are trying to keep farm products off the market, are picketing highways, persuading scabs.

### Farmers on the March

This is an event of the very first importance. For one thing, it is a fresh and vivid illustration of how unsound, wasteful and outworn the capitalist system is. These strikers are not Russian or Chinese or French peasants, living perhaps on exhausted soil, in crowded lands, using primitive agricultural methods. They are in America and in the rich Mississippi Basin. They have had the benefit of agricultural colleges and experiment stations. But they are bankrupt, their children are starving and ragged, they cannot open their schools this fall. The government has taught them to produce, and then the economic system which that government maintains has robbed them of the products of their toil. The farmer, therefore, sits on top of his pile of wheat starving, just as the building trades' worker, having built plenty of houses, cannot find the money to pay the rent, and the textile worker, having turned out an abundance of cloth, goes naked or ill clad.

Nowhere surely have resources been more recklessly squandered, or a farm population brought more swiftly and inexcusably to ruin than in the United States. Surely also the system which in the very midst of plenty has brought this about is "a hell of a system."

It does not take a genius to see that farmers in this desperate plight, who have resorted to the same methods as industrial workers use, are going to understand city workers and the labor movement a lot better and are going to be ready for increasingly close cooperation both on the political and on the economic and cooperative fields. That means a great gain for every progressive and radical movement.

The labor movement will have to see to it now that this solidarity with the farmers expresses itself in action and not just on paper. For example, William Green and President David B. Robertson of the locomotive Firemen and Engineers wired their sympathy and support to the striking farmers, and that was all to the good. When, however, the CPLA suggested to President Robertson that railroad transportation might be the means of breaking the farmers' strike, because while the farmers were stopping trucks, produce was being carried into Sioux City and other towns by the railroads, and that therefore railroad union workers should refuse to transport scab products, President Robertson wrote back that union workers were under contracts with the railroad managers which they could not break. Even if we must assume that existing contracts absolutely cannot be broken, in spite of the fact that they were made by the workers under the threat of starvation, and that such contracts have been repeatedly brazenly broken by the employing class, then still the question arises for such men as President Robertson, how long are they going to continue to make contracts which force union members to act with the profiteers and the bankers against the farmers, and how long farmers on their part are going to regard as genuine, professions of solidarity made by railroad officials under such circumstances.

Figures of farm mortgages, etc., conclusively show that the masses of farmers are no longer capitalists, not even small ones. American farmers on the average are not making farm-hands' wages, not to mention any return on their investment. We have always contended that an effective radical movement, political or otherwise, under modern conditions must be based on industrial workers, and that the farmers with their individualistic psychology, their ownership of land and their desire, like any capitalist, to get rich by forcing up the price of their land (that is, by speculation, alias gambling) all of which led them to quit a new party and vote Republican again as soon as the price of wheat went up, were no solid material for a working-class party. It still remains true that the industrial worker is the chief basis for working-class political action in an advanced industrial country, and that farmers still have and will have for some time to come, the hang-over of an individualistic psychology. Yet, from an economic standpoint, the farmers are now workers, proletarians, not owners and capitalists. They can be counted upon to merge more and more completely with city workers so that in a farmer-labor movement the two groups will not, as in the past, be separated by a hyphen which occasionally was very short, but usually so long that capitalist propagandists could completely prevent effective and permanent cooperation.

The CPLA rejoices that the farmers are on the march. We pledge our cooperation and solidarity. We want the militant and devoted workers among them to join us. Let the spirit of revolt against the stupid, wasteful, cruel economic system under which we live spread throughout the land.



# The Meaning of the Convention

by A. J. Muste

THE Conference for Progressive Labor Action has ceased to be a committee and has become an organization. That is one very important achievement of the first official CPLA convention held in New York City over the Labor Day weekend.

Even as a "Committee," functioning in a provisional way, the CPLA made important contributions to the labor movement. The movement which for the past three years has stimulated and helped the insurgents' fight against the Lewis regime in the United Mine Workers (sometimes being the only force to keep that insurgency alive); which helped to build the West Virginia Mine Workers Union and the Independent Labor Party of West Virginia; which has kept alive the memory of the Marion martyrs of 1929, building the Southern Industrial League and the Farmers League in North Carolina, gradually laying the foundations of a sound textile organization in the South and now furnishing help and leadership in the High Point and other strike areas; which has built a sane but militant opposition in the Hosiery Workers' Union; has stimulated the progressives in the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers and at the same time formed units of the Brotherhood of the Mills among workers to whom the present regime in the A.A. pays no attention; helped the campaign among the Edison Employees in New York; effected the amalgamation of the Paterson Silk Unions, assisted in the leadership of the Paterson General Strike of 1931, kept the union fighting in the face of an unprecedented depression, stimulated the building of an autonomous National Federation of Silk Workers within the U.T.W.; assisted opposition groups in many unions in campaigns against bureaucracy, racketeering and gangsterism, as e. g., the notable campaign in Local 3 Electrical Workers, New York, which has already, at least for the time being, restored numerous rights to the membership; which has kept in the forefront the idea of a mass labor party; and which through the national organization, branches or members has been wholly or largely responsible for the organization of Un-

employed Citizens Leagues in Seattle, Tacoma, Youngstown, O., Pittsburgh, Allentown, Philadelphia, Kanawha Valley of W. Va., Belmont County, Ohio, McDowell County in North Carolina, and many other places—such a movement has certainly already justified its existence!

Groups and individuals may, however, do a lot of work yet never achieve the clear philosophy, the definite and sound program, and the structure necessary for an organization, which is to stay on the job and grow. The New

York convention demonstrated that we have now a real membership and that this membership is determined not only to help build a labor movement but to build the CPLA as an indispensable means to that end. I refer to the decision to start not later than January first a weekly paper, *Labor Action*, retaining *LABOR AGE* as a monthly or bi-monthly organ. The demand for the weekly paper came in overwhelming volume from CPLA branches and organizers, from friendly unions, unemployed leagues and other bodies, who want to bring news of the workers in America and throughout the world, news culled and reported from a CPLA viewpoint to the masses.

What is the character and platform of this organization which has now taken definite form? It is an organization of active, devoted, militant workers, who will be expected to give time and energy to the work of the CPLA and in no case to subordinate CPLA attitudes and principles to those of other organizations. It seeks active members, not paper adherents. It excludes exploiters of labor from membership.

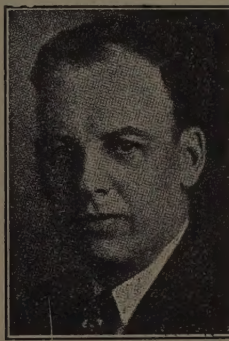
While we hold that such a militant organization can flourish only if it has a devoted membership possessed of a high morale and enthusiasm,

we recognize also that morale in an organization suited to American conditions today cannot be built up by mechanical discipline and theoretical hairsplitting. Discipline of the right type will develop naturally out of the work of the organization as it expands and calls forth devotion and enthusiasm.

Similarly we hold that our role in the general labor movement must be to educate, advise, guide, inspire rather than to attempt the impossible and dangerous role of a center which works out blueprints for every situation throughout the land and then gives forth commandments which must be slavishly obeyed. An effective left-wing vanguard for the American labor movement cannot be built by main force from the top. Unless, on the one hand, the masses move and, on the other hand, militants from all sections capable of carrying on in their own localities rally to us to receive inspiration and help and to give them to us in turn, we shall but break our heads



A. J. MUSTE,  
Chairman



LOUIS F. BUDENZ,  
Executive Secretary

York convention demonstrated that we have a philosophy, a program, a membership that will stick and is determined to build up the CPLA.

It is not only that delegates present at the convention voted to have an organization. The delegation showed that we had the makings of an organization right there. Twenty CPLA branches from 8 states were represented. Twenty-five unions, unemployed leagues and other organizations in which CPLA has been active sent fraternal delegates. The membership of the organizations thus represented totals over 40,000—another pretty convincing piece of evidence on the extent to which the CPLA has been striking down its roots among the workers especially during the past year.

## Our Weekly Paper

The single concrete action which aroused more enthusiasm than any other is another illustration of the fact



and wear out our spirits in a vain attack upon the entrenched forces of American imperialism.

The CPLA aims to abolish capitalism, not to reform it, and to build a workers' republic and a planned economic system operated by and for the workers. To this end it will everywhere stimulate and help the building of a fighting labor and farmer movement in all its phases, economic, political, cooperative and educational. It will not urge the workers to depend upon one type of organization or any single method to achieve power and build a new world, but to advance on all fronts and by the realistic use of whatever methods changing conditions dictate.

The CPLA seeks to root itself in American soil, face the realities of American life and talk to American workers in their own language and about their own problems, though recognizing clearly that the struggle against capitalism is international, standing for the defense of Soviet Russia against its capitalist and imperialist enemies and promoting world-wide solidarity of labor.

Members will work within existing economic organizations, commit them to progressive fighting policies and to cleaning out bureaucracy, racketeering and gangsterism where they have crept into these organizations. They will carry on the movement to organize the unemployed, to demand relief and unemployment insurance as well as more fundamental measures. They will continue as in the past to initiate and help movements to organize the masses of the unorganized in basic industries into industrial unions.

On the political field CPLA will work in the present period for the building of a unified labor party based upon or closely related to the economic organizations of the industrial workers and dirt farmers. It will engage in such political activities as may in its judgment best promote that end, political activities including, as the N.E.C. report stated, "all activities of a mass character which aim at something more than simple and immediate economic gains, the business of getting votes for candidates in an election being never an end in itself but only a means, and often a secondary one." Wherever and whenever a mass labor party is in existence, CPLA will work loyally within it, seek to advance a sound, radical program, and to secure the nomination by the mass party of candidates who can be counted upon to advance such a program. We are not just another party soliciting votes from workers in rivalry with some other labor party.

Above all, to quote again from the N.E.C. report: "It will be our task to combat vigilantly and relentlessly such corrupt and collaborationist tendencies as have often led European Labor and Social Democratic Parties to betray the workers."

### Unity in Action

The convention made it clearer than ever that CPLA will be increasingly the rallying center for those militants who are disgusted with the divisions, bickering and hair-splitting within the labor movement and who stand for labor unity—unity in action, not on paper. By this we do not mean uniformity; nor does our stand for unity mean that we have no distinctive position of our own and do not propose to stand by and defend it. But we shall strive with all our might to put an end to the situation which prevails today, when all too often workers are confused by the babel of voices which comes to them from radical and progressive ranks, and when their forces are divided, even in the midst of strikes when they are in direct conflict with the boss. The experience of the post-war period seems to have demonstrated pretty conclusively that at least in industrial countries a divided labor movement cannot effectively oppose the advance of Fascism. We stand, therefore, day in and day out, for genuine and effective labor unity in every phase of the movement.

Above all, the preamble to the newly adopted CPLA constitution suggests, "the movement of the working masses must be imbued with the will and the courage to fight." CPLA will be an organization of activists and fighters. It will try to make an active and fighting force out of the American labor movement. We shall, as in the past, contend against the notion that unions can be formed by persuading the boss that it would be a good thing for him if his workers were organized, instead of going to the workers and telling them that they can protect their own interests against the exploiters only by solidarity, courage and militancy. On the political field we shall contend against the fallacy to which Labor and Social Democratic Parties in Europe and elsewhere have so largely fallen a prey in the post-war period, namely, that when the capitalist business system is seriously threatened, the first job is for everybody to sacrifice and put the system back on its feet, and to collaborate to that end with middle class parties or even capitalist dictatorships. On the political field also we hold it is the business of the workers to fight capitalism.

Action in politics, action in the unions, action among the unemployed, action among the farmers, action in the unorganized basic industries, this is the CPLA emphasis. In our title the important word is not Conference and not Progressive, but Labor Action.

In full accord with this emphasis the convention put the working out of some important jobs up to the N.E.C., such as a unified labor campaign for the release of Tom Mooney; the pressing of the fight against racketeering and allied evils in the unions, including the sending of a committee to deal with this matter at the A. F. of L. convention to be held in Cincinnati in November; the setting up of a trade union committee to work out the technique of insuring the right of minorities in unions; a national clearing house for unemployed leagues, to give them information about successful methods; vigorous prosecution of our work in textiles and steel; cooperation with the miners in Illinois, West Virginia and other states in building a progressive miners' union on a national scale.

### Militant Rallying Center

Thus the CPLA convention is indeed a landmark in American labor history. The lack of an inspiring, militant rallying center has constituted the most alarming aspect of the present crisis in American labor. If the working masses of a nation are politically backward they can be educated, sometimes under the pressure of conditions with amazing rapidity. At this very moment, in struggles of the unemployed in various parts of the country, in strikes of farmers in such supposedly conservative agricultural sections as Iowa, Nebraska, Illinois and Wisconsin, in the renewed revolts of Southern textile workers, in the valiant struggle of Illinois miners against wage cuts, in the activities of the Bonus Expeditionary Force, in battles being waged by the rank and file in many unions against bureaucracy, corruption and gangsterism, we find abundant evidence of the militancy, courage and working-class intelligence latent in the American masses. A labor movement on its part may be stagnant, weak, corrupt, and yet be revived, revolutionized or replaced.

The natural militancy and courage of the masses go to waste, however, and a weak and degenerate labor movement cannot be reformed or removed, unless the active, devoted, militant spirits among the workers are effectively organized to give unity, coordination, leadership and inspiration to the masses and to mass organizations. If



these militants are weak, divided, petty, visionless, then the situation is indeed dangerous.

Now the CPLA is definitely and permanently in the field as an organization in which militants band together in order that they may learn to know each other, may train themselves to do real work, may plan to act together and not in a haphazard fashion.

## Forward, March!

Members and branches must now put their shoulders to the wheel, carry on more vigorously than ever their activities in the labor movement and build up the CPLA itself.

We call upon all working-class organizations, whether they can subscribe to our full program or not, to cooperate with us in the many labor activities where cooperation is possible

and desperately needed. We are not out to hamper or destroy other labor organizations but to develop more and more unified activity with them.

We appeal to workers, farmers, sympathizers with the labor movement, even if they cannot join us, to give us and our activities the utmost moral and financial support. No activities for the building of a new and  
(Continued on Page 29)

# Preamble to CPLA Constitution

Planless, profiteering, war-provoking, imperialistic capitalism must be abolished. It cannot be reformed. Sham political democracy which has been the tool of capitalist business and finance must also go. We must have a workers' republic and a planned economic order under which the masses will labor to create plenty, security, leisure and freedom for themselves, not profits, privilege and arbitrary power for a few.

The job of abolishing capitalism and building a new social order must be done by the workers, industrial, agricultural, clerical, technical, professional, who stand to gain, materially and spiritually, by the change. We, the workers, must ourselves provide the revolutionary will, the courage and the intelligence for the task.

To realize our aim we must achieve power. To gain power, we must organize.

Effective working-class organization in the modern world consists not merely of militant industrial unions, or farmers' unions, or a labor political party, or cooperative enterprises, or educational agencies, but of all these fused into a living movement advancing

on all fronts, toward its goal of a new society.

Above all, this movement of the working masses must be imbued with the will and the courage to fight. We do not delude ourselves with the notion that under present conditions the people have genuine democracy and have but to vote a new order into being if they so desire. The schools, the press, the radio, the pulpit, the courts, the police, the control of the job, are almost entirely in the hands of the possessing class. Though it may consent occasionally to slight reforms, provided it retains the reality of power and the right to profits, for the most part it makes increasingly lawless and violent use of the institutions which it controls. Unless, therefore, we choose submission to a Fascist dictatorship of big business and finance, the masses must oppose this lawlessness and tyranny by struggle on every front and by realistic and courageous use of the means which will accomplish their final emancipation. They must depend on their organized strength, not on the machinery of a capitalist government.

As always, so now in this crucial

period in the history of the American working class, the responsibility of giving inspiration, help and leadership to the masses in their struggle rests upon the active, devoted, militant workers. These active elements in order to be effective must know each other, must train themselves to do real work, must plan and act together and not in a haphazard fashion.

The CPLA has therefore been formed in the U. S. A., the very stronghold of capitalism and imperialism, to band militant workers together. It is an organization of militants, which talks to American workers in their own language about their own problems, which brings them help and inspiration in their daily struggle with the boss, which seeks in every way and on every front to unify and build up the power of labor, so that the workers may take control of industry and government, abolish the system which makes cannon-fodder out of them in time of war and machine-fodder in time of peace, and build a sane and just economic system and a workers' republic to be united in bonds of comradeship with workers' republics throughout the world.

## The National Executive Committee and Officers

Chairman, A. J. Muste, Vice President, American Federation of Teachers and Director, Brookwood Labor College.

Executive Secretary, Louis F. Budenz, leader of hosiery strikes in Kenosha and Nazareth, and executive secretary, Paterson general strike 1931, etc.

Treasurer, E. J. Lever, member International Association of Machinists, former president Philadelphia Labor College.

Members of National Executive Committee: Carl Brannin, director Labor College, Seattle, Wash.; Justice Ebert, official editor Amalgamated Lithographers Union; Elmer Cope, member of Amalgamated Assn. of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, Pittsburgh organizer for

CPLA; Clinton S. Golden, member of International Association of Machinists, farmer; J. B. S. Hardman, official editor Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America; Abram L. Harris, Negro economist, Howard University; Lawrence Hogan, head of Southern Industrial League, textile organizer, etc.; Harry A. Howe, editor of Labor Age; J. C. Kennedy, former head Seattle Labor College, Director of Studies, Brookwood Labor College; Edmund F. Ryan, Jr., Hosiery Workers Union, Philadelphia; David J. Saposs, labor historian, member of faculty, Brookwood Labor College; Karl Lore, organizer of Brotherhood of Steel Mills; William Stoffels, Illinois miner; Tom Tippet, Educational Director, West Vir-

ginia Mine Workers Union; Lucile Kohn, educator, New York; George Scherer, Secretary-Treasurer, West Virginia Mine Workers Union; Walter Seacrist, leader Kanawha Valley Unemployed League; Sam Bakely, leather goods' worker; William R. Truax, former official United Mine Workers of America, director Belmont County (Ohio), Relief Council; Anna Kula, member International Ladies Garment Workers Union, New York; Herman Gund, official editor Amalgamated Food Workers of America; William Beedie, New York, former I.L.P. member from Clyde, Scotland, and associated with the organization of Brotherhood of Brooklyn Edison Employees' campaign.



# Revolt of Illinois Miners

by Wm. Stoffels

**I**N the referendum of July 16, as I pointed out in my article in the August LABOR AGE, the miners rejected the proposed 28 per cent reduction by a very large majority. Without wasting any time the District officials then announced that the miners' vote had been unduly influenced by irresponsible agitators, and that the agreement slightly modified would be resubmitted to the membership to vote upon.

When the scale committee first acted upon this modified agreement their vote was tied, whereupon John L. Lewis and his Lieutenant Sneed took part in the balloting. The result was a majority of two for the reduction. The District and International officials then made an extensive campaign over the state to induce the miners to also ratify this agreement.

The reception the officials received from the miners was rather cold. In some camps the miners simply walked out of the hall, leaving bare walls for the fakers to talk to. In other towns the reception was pretty hot. At Johnston City the brave Walker had his wife along for protection. But the miners of that place decided that the age of chivalry is past. They threw stones at Walker's automobile. Broken windshields and bent fenders were the only damage, however.

The emperor J. L. Lewis did not expose his valuable person to such dangers. He spoke nowhere unless furnished ample protection. At the Benton Chautauqua Lewis received a roaring applause—from the 500 special deputies, the 50 highway police and some business men that surrounded the platform.

On August 16, after having made exhaustive preparations, the officials resubmitted the tentative agreement to referendum. It differed from the first only in the switching of paragraphs. There could have been no doubt in anyone's mind that to resubmit the same proposition to the same people to vote upon within a period of 30 days, must inevitably bring the same results.

As the votes were counted in the District office, the first hundred tally sheets showed a majority of approximately 5,000 to reject the new scale. Then happened something unexpected to the membership—the remaining tally sheets were stolen. The District office immediately notified the local unions that an emergency existed, and, as Walker said, "Realizing our respon-

sibility to the miners, and their families, and under the firm belief that the agreement has been ratified, and seeing our duty to the general public, we have signed the agreement." He concluded by saying, "You are hereby instructed to comply with its terms."

In view of many similar precedents, the miners were, however, not inclined to take Walker's gab for sober truth. Besides, if these tally sheets have really been stolen, are there not duplicates in each local union that could be collected within 24 hours?

The result of the officials' machination was that the 8,000 miners that had been working under the old scale pending settlement came out on strike solidly. Those that had been striking since April 1, for the biggest part continued on strike, but an appreciable number, constrained by necessity, followed the officials' dictum.

Bedlam reigned. The officials and their hirelings, together with the coal companies and their tugs, were as busy as bees to break what they call a dual movement. The strikers on the other hand were active day and night trying to make the strike unanimous. Some mines were working here and there. The four large Peabody mines at Taylorville were working full force. Both sides knew well that if the strikers could not conquer Taylorville their cause was doomed to failure.

The Peabody Coal Company owns not only four large mines but also Sheriff Wienecke in Christian County. Being well aware that the strikers would attempt to shut down the Taylorville mines Wienecke, to prevent this, appointed 1800 special deputies. He issued proclamations, manifestoes, and what-not, threatening what he would do to anyone trying to interfere with the operation of the Taylorville mines. Every road entering Christian County was guarded by a score or more deputies. Every highway police of Illinois, it seemed, had been transferred to Christian County. Some of the guards near the mines could hardly wait the appearance of the strikers' pickets. For pastime, they here and there took a shot at passing automobiles. Perhaps the most impressive thing were the six airplanes of the National Guard which, from morning till night, circled over the Peabody properties.

Lewis and Walker naturally were

also doing their best to avert the picketing of Taylorville. The day before the strikers moved on Taylorville, Lewis, speaking of them in the press, became rather suggestive. He said: "Surely these men are not dumb enough to think that the good, honest people of Christian County will let a wild, lawless mob horde overrun their beautiful and lovely county."

When the strikers had their preparations made to picket Taylorville, they sent a committee to inform the authorities of their intention. But things always seem to happen at the wrong time. Apparently an epidemic broke out among the politicians. Governor Emmerson was very ill. The Lieutenant Governor was taking his last gasps. Both the Secretary of State and Attorney-General were about to "kick off." The Chief of the Highway police had tremendous pains—his wife was having a baby. The Commandant of the National Guard had mysteriously disappeared, probably kidnapped. Unfortunately this whole gang recovered promptly after the Committee left.

The pickets of each local union were meticulously instructed to leave firearms and firewater at home. These orders, although they seemed preposterous to many miners, were followed to the dot. To properly describe the Taylorville picket line of August 18th, would require a Victor Hugo. The miners came by the thousands from all directions.

Confronted by this host, Wienecke drew in his horns, the Taylorville miners themselves marched out with flying banners to give their brothers a fitting reception. The whole thing miraculously ended without anyone receiving as much as a scratch. The Taylorville miners are now out.

The Lewis-Walker-Operator gang, although defeated at Taylorville did not cease their efforts to put the Illinois mines in operation. They have made Southern Illinois a rendezvous of gun-men. They have instituted a reign of terror there and are receiving whole-hearted support from the sheriffs. Numerous casualties have resulted. The leaders of the strikers are shot on sight. Several have been killed.

Confronted by this dictatorship the strikers in Southern Illinois were helpless. The policy committee of the strikers decided to picket these mines with outside help. On August 24 order was again given, "no booze, no arms." The picket lines that proceeded to



Southern Illinois that day are unprecedented in the history of Labor. Below Belleville, where several of the lines converged, the procession was 45 miles long. It seems that every coal miner went, for in the coal camps only women and children were left to greet the crusaders. The program was to proceed to Dowell where a mass meeting would be held, to camp there for the night, and to enter Franklin County the next morning to picket the mines.

When the head of the procession arrived in the neighborhood of Dowell, the Highway police intentionally misdirected it over a bridge into Franklin County. Machine guns were mounted on this bridge, ready for action. The beasts that manned these guns let about a hundred automobiles pass over, then—they fired into the mass, kept up a steady fire, riddling with bullets everything within reach. The miners, unarmed, fled for their lives. Hundreds of bloodthirsty deputies armed with guns and clubs then, with undescrivable fury, completed the carnage.

To the everlasting disgrace of Southern Illinois it must be recorded that even the hospitals refused admittance to men and women mortally wounded. There is indeed no animal so ferocious on this earth as the hypocritical, supposed-to-be-Christian rulers of that region.

The miners during that night withdrew from this inferno. To those retreating in the direction of Coulterville, the mayor of that town offered hospitality. About noon some 5,000 of these men held an open air meeting there.

Before the entire business of the Coulterville meeting was transacted the highway police arrived to harrass the miners some more. Notwithstanding the fact that the miners had the permission of the Mayor to meet in Coulterville, these highway police, brandishing revolvers and machine guns chased the miners out. Men that were about to take their first bite in over 24 hours were compelled to drop everything and "beat it."

The miners that met at Coulterville are only outwardly the same men who the day before, with flags and smiles, went to peacefully picket. Inwardly they are very much different. The dictators of Southern Illinois in 24 hours have accomplished more than a thousand labor agitators could in fifty years. They have beaten the miners on that day, but they have not conquered them. The victory, in fact, is on the side of the miners. They have regained the spirit that for years had been put to

## August 24

By HUGH TALLEY

WE left Springfield in a caravan of cars that was more than three miles in length, with about 3,500 miners. We went through Mt. Olive and Staunton, meeting other groups of miners all the way. When we arrived in Belleville another huge caravan was there to meet us. In all there were around 35,000 miners. It would be hard to estimate the number of cars, for we were in front and did not have a chance to see the end of the line.

The first compulsory stop was made at Swanwick, Perry County, which adjoins Franklin. The sheriff was there with about 60 special deputies. They had machine guns, rifles, shotguns and pistols. We blocked the road completely with our cars and told them we would not open up until they would permit the caravan to pass. The state police were there and tried to turn us back, but were unsuccessful. After a stop of about two hours the road was cleared and we were permitted to proceed. We were about 40 miles from our objective.

At Duquoin, six miles outside of Franklin County, we met a second group of deputy sheriffs and gunmen well armed and assisted by state police. Our plan had been to go directly south of Duquoin into Dowell, Jackson County, where the mayor had extended a welcome to us. But the deputies and state police turned us toward Franklin County, which we had not intended to invade until the following day. This was a dastardly trap. We were headed for Mulkeytown, but we never reached there. Our car was along toward the front and just as we reached a sweeping turn hell broke loose. The deputies' guns began to roar. They fired into the cars and a number slumped over in their seats at the first fusillade. Then everything was confusion and panic. Women in the cars were struck as well as men, the windshield in our

car was shattered. How we escaped is more than I can understand.

The driver of our car attempted to turn and it seemed that everyone else was trying to do the same. The road was soon choked and we were forced to abandon the car, for the gunmen, not satisfied with the havoc already wrought came charging at us wielding clubs and discharging machine guns, pistols and shotguns. After the first charge, cars attempted to leave with the wounded, but the road was completely blocked. We returned to our car then. Again the guns began to roar. Glass was shattered in our car a second time and we were again compelled to leave. This time our group scattered and my brother and I leaped into a ditch by the roadside. We had not lain there long until bullets were flying all about us. We dashed back upon the road, dodging from car to car hoping to get back across the county line into Perry some half mile away.

Along the way we saw cars piled up in ditches, some burning others badly wrecked. Some were attempting to move, others were deserted. The road was choked. After some debate we decided to go back and attempt to retrieve our car. It was then that we ran the gauntlet of gunmen, who clubbed and beat us. I tried to ward off some of the blows and received others for my pains. I saw one of our fellows beaten to his knees and still being beaten without being able to go to his help. I was stopped by three, and while one held a machine gun against me the other two beat me with clubs. I put my arm over my head for protection which probably accounts for my not having a busted skull.

The newspapers report 12 injured by gunshot and some 100 wounded with clubs. It seems impossible that none were killed.

This incident is one more lesson the Illinois miners have had to learn and pay for. Once again they attempted to protect their rights by peaceful and legal methods. Not a miner was armed and we had caused no disorders. Some of us had said before we started, "Put the American flag on the cars, they won't shoot her down." But they did shoot her down. I saw one gunman tear the flag from a car and trample it in the road. Now we are about through with flags and peace and law. These things can get us nothing. Those who rob us of our labor do not believe in such things, they are only instruments to keep us in slavery.

August 24 is another day the Illinois miners will remember.

sleep by labor fakers. Their final victory is now assured. It is now extremely clear to these men that all the forces of government are determined that the miners must submit to a gang of cheating, unscrupulous labor racketeers, Lewis, Walker and Co. Rest assured, there are not enough cutthroats in the U. S. A. to stop the miners now. They will picket. But not any more will they act as targets for a gang of assassins.



# The Farm Strike

by Arnold Sather

**R**EADING a leading article in one of the papers of the Middle West one comes across this statement, "Meanwhile deputy sheriffs were forced to lay down tear gas barrages on highway 34 leading into Council Bluffs Tuesday night as picketers changed their methods from 'peaceful persuasion' to 'forceful blockading'." Does this statement refer to a strike carried on by the miners of Illinois or by textile workers in Massachusetts? No. It refers to striking farmers in Iowa. For the first time in history farmers have adopted the direct action methods of their city brothers in an attempt to secure justice. They have gone out on strike. They have not struck against their employers, for farmers are supposed to employ themselves. But as producers they have struck against buyers and middlemen in an attempt to secure cost of production for their commodities.

The writer first heard intimations of a possible farmers' strike in the fall of 1930 while he was attending the annual convention of the Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America in Omaha, Neb., J. J. O'Shea, Roberts, Montana, secretary-treasurer of that organization, on the floor of the convention, uttered words to this effect: "If we as farmers cannot secure cost of production for what we have to sell through legislative appeal we will resort to direct action. We will buy nothing, sell nothing, do nothing and thus compel society to render justice to us."

This summer the strike idea, as expressed by O'Shea, took root in the rolling farm land of Boone County, Iowa. On the various roads leading into the town of Boon, farmer pickets appeared to stop truck loads of hogs, grain, poultry, cream and other farm commodities, and gently but firmly insisted that the drivers turn back and return the products to the farms from which they came. "There is a farm strike on," said the picketers "and no farm products go to market until prices go up." Some of the drivers turned back readily enough. Others insisted on going to market. Then the picketers resorted to other methods of persuasion. They leaped on the running boards, snatched the ignition keys from their locks and threw them among the roadside weeds; or they threw heavy planks thickly studded with spikes in front of the trucks; or perhaps a heavy piece of timber came crashing through the windshield. In

case of a cream truck where the driver insisted on going on the cream cans were upset and thick streams of precious cream flowed from shiny cans into the ditch along the road. This particular act aroused the ire and enmity of the residents of Boone and of other Iowa towns. Many of them have not been able to afford such a luxury as cream in their coffee in months and even years. Many of them could not afford to buy milk to feed to their children. To them wasting cream in this manner was a sacrilegious act. It increased their dislike for the farmer. It served as another wedge to drive farther apart the people of the town and of the country.

Most newspaper readers did not think the strike would amount to very much. But it has spread rapidly in the past few weeks into Nebraska, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and may at any time spread into other states. All summer farmers have held mass meetings in all parts of Iowa for organization purposes. Committees of farm leaders meet frequently to plan how best to conduct the strike, and how to interest farmers in other states in the movement. The national leader is Milo Reno, past President of the Farmers' Union of Iowa.

The strike came into national prominence a short time ago when dairy-men in the vicinity of Sioux City, Iowa, demanded a higher price for their milk from the distributors than they had been receiving. They had been getting only \$1.00 per hundred pounds. They demanded \$2.17 per 100 pounds. Later they compromised on \$1.80. Farm picketers concentrated their efforts on Sioux City attempting to stop completely the entrance of all farm products to that city. They succeeded so well that nothing came into that city save what arrived on trains. Farmers even began to attempt interfering with train movements. Yet for all the activities of the strikers no noticeable results were to be seen on the markets. Farm products continued to fall in price.

No sooner did the farmers begin their picketing activities than the officers of the law rushed into action. The sheriffs in the various affected counties swore in deputy sheriffs by the hundreds. Many of the latter were chosen from the unemployed, who were most happy to secure not only something to do but a great deal of excitement as well.

It was the duty of officers of the law to see that the farmers did not resort to violence in the process of enforcing their demands, and that the

(Continued on Page 28)



Striking Farmers Stopping a Car



# Philadelphia Unemployed Act

by John Godber

(Member Philadelphia Unemployed Citizens' League)

PHILADELPHIA, known to many as the most reactionary city in the eastern part of our country, is at last putting up a determined fight against the forces of big business that have ruled this so-called city of brotherly love for generations.

The battle is being waged by the newly-formed Unemployed Citizens' League and one of our chief obstacles is a city administration that will state in the daily press that "No starvation exists in Philadelphia," or "80 per cent of the unemployed are jobless because they are lazy."

We organized in June with but twelve members and now, two months later, we have grown to such a size that we are fast becoming a threat to many political flunkies. Our first achievement was the staging of a hunger march to Harrisburg to impress our august representatives, then assembled in special session, with the necessity of providing immediate adequate relief.

Our marchers were treated to the usual thing that occurs when a worker goes to visit his representatives. Fully two thirds of the combined membership of the house and senate were absent from the public hearing. Incidentally it might be interesting to note that the first act the assembly performed when called into extraordinary session was to vote themselves half their salary and adjourn for the week-end.

One of the speakers appearing before the session representing the workers, was Fagin of the United Mine Workers, district number five, who presented the chairman a copy of the Encyclical of Pope Leo dealing with human rights with a request that the legislators should study it. Fagin stated, "There are two sins that cry to heaven for vengeance, namely, oppression of the poor and willful murder, and that is what the legislature is guilty of." The program of the State Federation of Labor, which the marchers presented, called for one hundred million dollars for the relief of the unemployed in this great liberal state of Pennsylvania. No one, least of all the writer, expected a hundred million, but we did have a very slight idea that perhaps we would get at least half. What we actually did get will be told later.

Some time after this hunger march took place our Governor Pinchot went

to Washington with a little tin cup in his hand to see the R.F.C. Mr. Pinchot asked for forty-five million dollars from the federal government. He really expected to get it, for he had quite a few bodyguards along to help him bring home the bacon. Lo and behold the bad men in Washington were having their own troubles with the bonus army and they chased the governor right back home again without giving the poor old gentleman anything in the money line.

By this time the legislature was getting rather desperate. They had been to all the golf courses in Harrisburg and were out looking for new fields to conquer, so after being in session for eight weeks they voted the magnificent sum of twelve millions of dollars to feed the starving citizenry of Pennsylvania. Of course it would be against the bonds of friendship to make our dear friends Grundy and the Mellon boys pay this twelve million, so the legislature thought a sales tax would cover everything up and everyone would once more be happy and prosperous. They made a sad mistake. The business men are going to court to stop the collection of the sales tax, and it is so much trouble to collect that perhaps we will have another special session before long to devise ways and means of collecting this sales tax.

In the middle of July when the League saw that relief was not coming from Harrisburg we decided to go out and get it ourselves. We secured the services of trucks and have canvassed the markets and nearby farms for foodstuffs. In this line of work we have been highly successful and are now distributing, on an average, anywhere from fifteen to twenty tons of foodstuffs to over six hundred families weekly. To do this it is necessary quite often for some of us to start work at nine A.M. and finish about four A.M. the following day.

Another phase of our activity is the stopping of evictions. As soon as the League hears of an eviction, it is investigated and then a permit for a street meeting in front of the home to be vacated is secured and to quote the Philadelphia Record here is what

usually happens. "Constable Dugel went into Kensington yesterday with papers, badge and everything necessary for an eviction. As Dugel drove up to the house in his car, something made him think of the sad fate of Constables Casey and Burns who preceded him in a Kensington eviction case and were rescued from a mob by a riot squad. In front of the home a man was standing on a soap-box. Dugel paused to listen, 'Are we going to stand by while the tools of capitalism throw us out of our homes?' the speaker shouted; a thundering NO answered him: 'And here for lack of a few dollars, an aged widow is to be put out on the streets, penniless, a pauper thrown out by the mercenary hand of capitalism.' The crowd roared—husky men rolled up their sleeves—Constable Dugel shuddered and then continued on his way."

The League intends to stop all evictions in the same manner, but now the constables are trying a new scheme. They are getting around early and staying in their machines with the intention of tiring our speaker out and then going ahead with their damnable eviction. We are warning them that that scheme won't work, for if necessary we will stick on the soap box until capitalism dies of senility.

Some weeks ago an officer of the Philadelphia branch of the Communist Party secured the floor in our weekly membership meeting and brought up a proposition that we should unite with the Unemployed Council in staging a demonstration in the City Council. This proposition was fought and defeated. One of its most bitter opponents was the Chairman of our relief committee. A few days after this while on his way home this man was attacked by three thugs. He put up a stiff battle and two of the would-be attackers ran off, while the third one was arrested and held under five hundred dollars bail.

However, we appointed a committee of our own to visit the City Council, and by going about it in the right way our committee got a hearing. The spokesman was given five minutes in which to state our case and he consumed twelve minutes during which he said; "I am not here to threaten you gentlemen yet, but I warn you that unless relief is forthcoming very soon from City Council, Philadelphia will have a very serious problem on its hands this winter."



# Revolt Brews in the South

by Lawrence Hogan

ON August 18, 1932 the eyes of the South were turned on High Point, N. C., where 15,000 workers came out on strike protesting a wage reduction. The Chambers of Commerce were aghast and the civic organizations were dumbfounded. It meant that they could no longer advertise the workers as "cheap and contented." It also meant that they couldn't lay all the blame on outside agitation, as they have attempted to do in so many cases, because the revolt here was spontaneous.

The workers themselves didn't think that the revolt would spread as it did, because there had been no preparatory work. So naturally the workers, as each mill walked out, would elect as their leader the same one that the first one to strike had elected. This happened to be D. V. Bradley, a boarder in the Guilford Seamless Hosiery Mill.

When the strike had gone on about two days all furniture workers returned to work. But 5,000 seamless and over 1,000 full fashioned hosiery workers and 650 cotton mill workers started setting up machinery to carry the fight on. They formed themselves into a brotherhood and started conferences to settle the matter.

The civic leaders preached it into the strikers that no outsider should be allowed to come in; that they, the respectability of High Point, and the workers could work together and get the thing settled. Most of the rank and file didn't approve of this, but the seamless committee accepted their assistance. This meant that the civic leaders were in control of the strike.

So when Beulah Carter from Durham, N. C., arrived in High Point for the American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers Union, she was detained at the fire station by city officials and questioned for several hours.

I was sent from Marion by the Hosiery Workers Union to do the investigation, and was asked to show that I was a native of North Carolina.

The politicians succeeded in this work to the extent that it was almost impossible for Beulah and myself to give the seamless workers very much assistance. This is the reason that after three weeks the seamless workers accepted an agreement which was full of loop-holes. Governor Gardner was given the credit for getting this settlement. But this was worked to avoid public sentiment from going against

the governor, because the people were sore at him for sending the 64 highway patrolmen in. It happened that the agreement was reached Friday night and the governor was called in Saturday to be the person responsible for them going back to work.

After the seamless workers were back in the mill, they set about forming a local organization which they call the Industrial Association of High Point. They elected D. V. Bradley as president of their organization. Just what the results of this organization will be remains to be seen. There is very much dissatisfaction among the seamless workers at present. Several of the manufacturers have posted notices that they will no longer deal with the committees elected during the strike. There is likely to be another strike of seamless workers at High Point at any time.

With the full fashioned workers it was different. They cooperated with the full fashioned representatives through the committees. When the strike had gone on for a few days they withdrew from the seamless workers and fought their way alone. They were out three weeks and received an agreement that didn't mean much unless they organized. As soon as the strike was settled they started joining the American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers Union, and as yet haven't lined up with the seamless workers.

The situation in the Adams and Millis plant, one of the full fashion plants on strike, is acute at present. Since the strike, organization work has been going on among them. The Hosiery Workers having taken advantage of the opportunities and kept Beulah and myself on the job.

The situation at the full fashioned is likely to erupt at any time. The company has announced that it will no longer meet with the committee and has asked the chairman to resign.

August 13 some of the silk mills raised wages 10 per cent in Burlington. The workers in the May hosiery mill and the McEwen Hosiery company, both full fashion, decided to strike for more wages. The workers were very badly disorganized and had in the mill nobody to take responsibility of leadership. So when the machinery was cut

off by the workers the bosses came to them in tears, begging them to go back, stating that they would raise wages at the earliest possible moment. The workers returned to work. The next morning nine of the workers were fired. As I write this the boys are trying to get back in the plant. The workers say they must get back if they are forced to strike to get them back. So the mills in Burlington are likely to come out on strike at any moment.

The same thing is true of most every full fashioned plant in North Carolina.

The workers in the Mock Judson and Volhinger plants in Greensboro where they have a yellow dog contract are very dissatisfied. We are giving them plenty of good hot literature and every thing looks promising. This dissatisfaction is not only in full fashioned plants, but in every part of the textile industry.

This week 350 workers of the Pine Hurst Silk Company of Hemp, N. C., were locked out because they had taken a strike vote to come out unless they got a wage increase. They are asking for moral and financial support from the labor movement.

A spontaneous walkout has just occurred at Rockingham where all cotton mills are asking for a wage increase and a 10 hour day.

The workers of the Spencer mill at Spindale, N. C., are on strike asking for abolishment of the stretchout and a new boss.

Everywhere you go in the South you hear about the unrest and plans being made to strike.

Never has the labor movement had the opportunity to organize in the South as it has today. Never have the eyes of the workers been turned toward organization as they are turning today.

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# There Are Classes in the W.Va. Hills

by Lucile Kohn

**L**AST year the Kanawaha Valley was reechoing to the song of, "there are unions in the West Virginia Hills," written by Walter Seacrist, a young W. Va., miner and Brookwood graduate. This year, following in the wake of the union, have come classes. Circuit teaching in mining-camps is not an altogether new phenomenon in workers' education. Several years ago when the miners' union was still flourishing in Illinois, Tom Tippet inaugurated a system of field classes in the southern Illinois field. But these classes were for a group of men and women who were on the whole well-fed, well-clothed and well housed with a strong union background and a desire to tie up trade-union activity with an educational program. There were adequate halls in which to conduct their classes and even text-books for the students.

From such a Utopian picture of field education to the classes now being conducted in West Virginia, is a far cry. Columbus Ball, Griselda Kuhlman, Tony Pierce and Walter Seacrist, all Brookwood graduates under the direction of Tom Tippet are leading men, women and children in an educational venture, difficult as it is unique. The mining camps in which the project is being launched radiate out from Charleston as a center. Every afternoon and evening of the week another town is covered. Men and women are divided into groups for the purely practical purpose of breaking into smaller units. The same subjects based on, "Your Job and Your Pay," by Tippet and Pollak are handled by both. Naturally in communities where food is at a premium, text-books are non-existent. So the teachers of the hillside schools, as the miners call them, have to present their subject matter in the simplest form and language. At first the crowd sits with eyes firmly fixed upon the lecturer in dazed silence. Gradually, however, the bolder spirits break in with denial or affirmation of the statements made and finally the discussion ball is rolling all over the place.

The miners finally come into their own when the whole group, men, women and children, particularly the children and thousands of them, gather together for current events. The concentrated effort made to understand

how we got that way, wage tables or charts to illustrate the distribution of wealth, is gone when the miners mull over the Davis-Kelly bill, discuss why Boone County gets no relief or figure what will be the share of each family in the Kanawaha field in federal or state appropriations for the unemployed.



A Miner's Family Living in a Tent Colony

The great moment for the class comes when, a hundred strong, stud-

ents and teachers, grizzled miners with their tired wives, nursing babies at their breasts, and children of all sizes stand under the trees with dusk coming on singing the "Death of Mother Jones" or "Solidarity Forever." Columbus Ball, himself a miner, with a guitar leads the song and it is lustily taken up by the children who have spent part of their hour of class-room in learning these songs. It is a ragged crowd inarticulate and downtrodden, but for the moment there is an exaltation that fills the spirit of all who participate in the gathering.

Then comes the feeling that all the obstacles that have to be overcome for such primitive teaching have not been in vain. The rough rides in the swollen creek bottom, the many miles of railroad tracks trudged over on foot, the frequent occasions when rain either disperses the waiting crowds or drives them into a stuffy little room, unlit or at best poorly illuminated by a sputtering kerosene lamp, all these hardships are forgotten in the glow of a rare moment.

"Schools" in the West Virginia Hills are crude, rude, limping sort of workers' education, but when they are over and done they mean something perhaps a little deeper, a little more lasting and vital than the smoother classes held in modernly equipped school-houses.

## The Brookwood Fellowship Chautauqua

During the week of August 13-19 a workers' education chautauqua toured the following towns in Pennsylvania: Allentown, Shenandoah, Mt. Carmel and Wilkes Barre. In all of these places the group of former Brookwooders and future Brookwooders were received by enthusiastic audiences.

The program of the chautauqua consisted of a play, "What Price Coal," a skit on unemployment, labor songs and talks on workers' education during these times of unemployment by Anna Kula and John Coveleski.

A definite suggestion on the forma-

tion of classes and "study circles" was discussed by the active members of the groups at each place, and out of the contacts made it is hoped to organize such study groups this coming year.

At a joint meeting of the Brookwood faculty and Fellowship after the trip it was decided that at least one Brookwood instructor should give part time in Pennsylvania and with the help of former Brookwooders organize "study circle" groups.

Literature to be used by these groups as well as outlines dealing with the organization of self-education groups can be had by writing Brookwood Labor College, Katonah, N. Y.



# The Negro's Road To Freedom

by Ernest Rice McKinney

**I** DO not intend to make any dogmatic exposition of this subject even though the title itself may carry that implication. I do however intend to point out very definitely what I believe to be at least one road over which the Negro must travel if he would arrive at a place of power along with other workers.

The Negro has always been a scab in the labor movement and a sore on its body. It seems that neither he nor the white worker has ever been able to think clearly through the problem to the reasons for this. The proper explanation, I believe, is found in the desire of American capitalism to have at hand a large and constant source of supply for the semi-skilled and unskilled tasks in the mills, mines and factories. I can illustrate this by relating a recent happening in Alabama according to the report of a white worker. This man said that in a certain machine industry which employed twenty-four skilled machinists, automatic machines were installed. These machinists had been paid fifty cents an hour. With the automatic machines however the operation could be performed with semi-skilled workers. Four Negroes were hired at twenty-five cents an hour. The white machinists were called in and told that a few of them could be reemployed but that they would have to work for the same wage as the Negroes were getting, twenty-five cents an hour and not fifty as formerly. This white worker had seen the light and was ready to take the Negro into the labor movement, not as a Negro but as a worker.

This incident is significant. It symbolizes most effectively one of the reasons for the weakness of our labor movement. Also I mention in passing that the thousands of Negroes who came into the steel industry during the important strike of 1919 were a part of the means at the disposal of the steel companies for defeating this strike. It is one of the ironies of history that William Z. Foster, who is now linked up with a Negro in a political campaign and who was the leader of that strike, did not at that time believe that it was worth while to include the Negro worker in his organization efforts.

Of course the Negroes themselves, through their leaders have contributed to this evil situation. These leaders have been concerned with some vapory

thing called the Negro's "rights" and with job hunting for themselves. Their activities have been almost wholly political. There are two things that Negro leaders don't seem to know: that no group has any rights if that group is not strong enough to take them. No dominant group voluntarily gives "rights" to a weak group. Secondly, Negro leaders seem reluctant to accept the fact that political power follows from and grows out of economic power. You almost never see a Negro leader take a strong and definite stand for the active participation of Negro workers in out and out workers' movements.

There are reasons for this which I don't have space here to go into in detail. One is the fact that the Negro has been conditioned into becoming a rank and stark conservative. We are not even liberal or progressive not to say anything about radical. It is no unusual thing to hear a Negro say: "If I am going to mix with white folks I want it to be rich white folks, not poor white trash." To be sure this attitude is ridiculous but it is a reality and must be faced as such. He does not understand that he can only mix with the "rich white folks" as lackey, flunky, beggar or wage slave. As a rule his approach is that of a flunky or beggar. There is not much that we can get from our leaders that is enlightening at this point for the reason that the majority of them are in the roll of flunky and beggar.

## White Workers Are Guilty

This means that we Negroes do not understand the economic scene and the industrial set-up. The tragedy is that white workers in this field have ignored us and left us to our ignorance, low wages, long hours, the worst and meanest jobs and a disproportionate amount of unemployment. The white worker helped the ruling class to segregate us, proscribe us and discriminate against us. And it is the white worker who lynches the Negro worker. It never dawned on the white toilers in the capitalist vineyard that the black wage slaves were part and parcel of them. I believe though that three years of unemployment will create a new outlook. When a black and white ex-worker approach a garbage can together for breakfast their actual

equality in the eyes of the ruling class is thereby proclaimed.

There are Negro leaders who say that our road to freedom lies in the direction of the establishment of strong and powerful business institutions. I confess that I once flirted with this idea, which I now hold to be utterly defeatist from the standpoint of the Negro masses. These advisers have taken their cue from white capitalism. But evidently they are not, observing the course of capitalism in this day and time. They have their eyes on the spring-time of capitalism when it was possible for any little fellow to open a small business, work hard and watch it grow into a giant corporation employing thousands of workers. This is not true of business today. Corporations are born full-grown and mature. They then begin to swell, expand and puff up. There must be capital enough to initiate this swelling and puffing at once.

## Negro Capitalism—For Whom

The idea is that Negro plants, factories and businesses of all sorts could hire Negro workers and thereby raise the standard of living and create wealth within the group. These Negro business institutions would also compete with white companies not only for our own patronage but also for the patronage of the whites. Such successful competition would change the outlook of the whites toward the Negro and in time everything would be sweetness and light. For instance if Negro insurance companies become strong enough they can take \$60,000,000 worth of business way from the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. And then the Metropolitan will be glad to hire Negro agents (they don't employ any now) in order to get some of that business back. And furthermore insurance companies will not discriminate against Negroes (as they do now) in the types of policies which they are permitted to buy.

The main idea of course is to increase the supply of jobs for the Negro. He is refused many types of employment by the white employer and so it is argued that Negroes must establish their own businesses in order to provide for their own people. Hence the rosy picture of how much better off the Negro would be if he were a big business man, a "producer" and not merely a consumer. If we have Negro capitalists, these capitalists will



employ hundreds and thousands of Negro workers. Retail stores and other shops will spring up. Banks will open and Negro credit will flow into Negro enterprises. This wealth will trickle down to the workers; they will have full dinner pails, a chicken in every pot, a car in every garage and a cutaway in every wardrobe.

There are many things wrong in this picture. The whole scheme is out of gear and unrealistic. My chief objection is that even if such a state of affairs could be brought to pass, the mass of Negroes would not be benefited. I challenge any Negro who advocates this scheme to submit any evidence or reasoning that can show that a Negro manufacturer, or banker or mine owner or utility magnate would act any differently toward employees than a white employer would act. I mean to say that Negro workers would get the same type of treatment from a Negro employer that they would get from a white employer. They would be exploited just as they are exploited now. They would work for low wages and would be subjected to the injunction, the yellow dog contract, the lockout and the rigors of industrial conflict just as are workers employed by white owners. This all, for the reason that Negro business would be capitalist business the same as white business. The men who owned Negro business would be capitalists and integral parts of the capitalist system. The evils which I have enumerated are inherent in the system. The object of the black business man would be to make profits just as it is the object of the white business man to make profits. Our business men would be forced to go along with the system, else there would be no profits and their businesses would collapse instantaneously.

I am saying that this would be true for the mass of Negro workers. They would get no more out of it than they get now from the white bosses. It is conceivable that they would get less. This is the important thing to stress; not whether Negro capitalism would help a few Negroes to get rich, as white capitalism aids only a few whites to acquire wealth but rather what would be the relation of Negro capitalism to the Negro workers as a whole. I have said and wish to re-emphasize that no benefits would accrue to the Negro masses simply because the color of capitalism had been changed. This means that Negroes can no more afford to compromise with black capitalism than they can afford to compromise with white capitalism.

This is the first and most important lesson that the Negro worker must learn.

### Class Not Color

This means that the Negro worker must give up many foolish notions about race consciousness and race solidarity and begin to acquire a far more fundamental and basic class consciousness and class solidarity transcending the bounds of race. This proposal assumes of course the further proposal that the white worker do the same. Among the Negro masses there is urgent need for education at this point. It seems that we have not learned yet the fact that we are being exploited by Negro leaders who although almost entirely ignorant of the historical course of capitalism, of its theoretical assumptions and of its practical applications on the industrial and financial fields and of the many proposals for revision or complete overthrow of capitalism; yet are cunning and shrewd enough to know that they can and do profit by the system. Hence these leaders desire the continuance of capitalism and are zealous in opposing the entrance of the Negro masses into any organization which is not at least partially under the domination of themselves or their own white bosses and allies. All of this of course is a suggestion for the organization of Negroes into a mass movement that has for its ultimate aim the complete overthrow of Negro capitalism along with the overthrow of white capitalism.

This brings us to a great difficulty: How shall the Negro worker be organized? It is easy to reply, "Just as the white worker is organized." But this reply means exactly nothing. It means nothing for the reason that such a reply is far too simple and probably ignores the realities of the American scene. And for the same reason it would be equally useless to consider any proposal to organize the Negro along entirely different lines from those of the white workers and always into separate unions.

### Watch Your Step

I am ready to admit, without accepting any hard and fast rule, that there may be places and conditions which make it necessary to have separate organizations for Negroes and whites. I am convinced that identical methods cannot be used say, in Mississippi and Ohio. Conditions may vary from industry to industry that may make it necessary to return to conference and overhaul some of our theories. We must face the actualities of race

prejudice and misunderstanding. We must take into consideration, to the extent that we are capable, all of the historical and psychological factors that enter into the problem. We must consider the stage of development — I should say the relative stage of development — of the Negro and white workers as well as the relative stage of development of the two groups in particular industries. And I take it that the problem will not present itself in the same way in organized industries as it does in those that are unorganized.

The first requisite is absolute honesty, a high degree of humility and a determination to experiment patiently, persistently and intelligently. Guess work, presuppositions and old line reactions to the race question will not fill the bill. Men on the job and facing the Negro-white problem daily are just as apt to make mistakes as so-called theorists who are not in daily contact with Negro workers. All of the vague theories do not come from college professors, car window sociologists and female investigation enthusiasts. On the question of organizing the Negro worker there are apt to be just as many empty theorizers and get-no-where philosophers in the labor movement as one can find elsewhere. It has always amused me to listen to one of these fellows, who brags so much about practice and experience over against theory, begin to sputter theory pure and undefiled, when he gets to consideration of the Negro worker. The trouble with these fellows is that they do not understand the nature and function of theory, nor the fact that an alleged practical man may himself be a pure theorist. This is apt to be particularly true when this type of labor leader is dealing with the problem of the Negro worker.

### CPLA Has a Program

To get back to the specific matter of organizing the Negro worker, I hold that no one can sit at any one place and say how it should be done all over the United States. This would be silly. It would be just as silly however to follow or advocate the method that has been followed by the A. F. of L. and other groups. The one best guide I believe, is the program and principles of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action. The principles laid here are basically and theoretically correct. This program will be readily accepted by the Negro workers if it is presented to them by white and Negro leaders who themselves have already absorbed these

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# Stocks Up—Jobs Down

by John C. Kennedy

**B**ETWEEN the end of September, 1929 and the end of June, 1932 two hundred and forty leading stocks listed on the New York exchange depreciated in market value \$46,661,000,000 or about 91 per cent. In July, however, an upturn began in the stock market. The rise in stock prices continued, with brief interruptions, during the month of August. So once more we are being told by the financial prophets that the depression is coming to an end. On August 26th President Hoover informed a conference of financiers and industrialists at Washington that "We have overcome the major financial crisis."

We have learned from experience not to attach much importance to the optimistic prophecies of the President and leading business men, but the rise in stock prices is a fact. Is this rise based on any real change for the better in basic economic conditions, or is anything tangible happening to indicate economic recovery in the near future?

## The Plain Truth

The actual trend of industry is well shown by the New York Times index of business conditions which is based on the weekly output of steel, automobiles, electric power, cotton cloth and the number of cars of freight loaded in the entire country. This index shows that production has steadily gone down during the past year and that the decline continued during July and August when stock prices were rising. For the week ending August 20 the index showed production was being maintained on an average, at 52.2 per cent of normal—the lowest point yet reached in the depression.

Dun and Co. reported 2,596 mercantile failures in July, 1932 with debts of \$87,189,639 compared with 1,983 failures in July, 1931 with debts of \$60,997,853.

F. W. Dodge Co. reports construction contracts in 37 states for July, 1932 at \$128,768,700 compared with \$285,997,300 in July, 1931.

U. S. exports in July, 1932, were \$107,000,000 compared with \$180,772,000 in July, 1931. In this month American foreign trade dropped to the lowest level in 20 years.

Along with these indisputable evidences of decreasing industrial and commercial activity we would naturally expect a falling off in employment. And that is precisely what all available figures indicate. For example, the U. S.

Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that, taking all kinds of factories into consideration for the entire country, employment fell off 3 per cent in July compared with June, and that payrolls fell off 6.1 per cent. This bureau points out in its latest report that payrolls in American factories now amount to only 36.2 per cent of normal.

Frances Perkins of the New York State Industrial Commission reports that employment in New York State factories fell off 5.3 per cent from June to July. The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia reports a drop in factory employment in Pennsylvania in the month of July of 5 per cent compared with June, and a drop of 10 per cent in the amount paid out in wages. The same bank reports that jobs in the anthracite coal industry fell off 16.1 per cent in July compared with June.

So what we have actually been witnessing during the months of July and August is an increase in the market prices of stocks and a decrease in industrial activity and jobs. Speculators and politicians may call this a return of prosperity but it provides no bread for the unemployed.

## Outlook For The Future

For three years unemployment has increased steadily. Except in one or two industries, such as textiles, unemployment is increasing today. The reports about this or that factory taking on more workers are misleading. The business propagandists tell us about the workers put on—they don't tell us about the workers laid off. For example, when Henry Ford announced with a great flourish of trumpets last spring that he was going to stake his entire fortune on a business revival and speed up the production of new cars to full capacity, that was front page news. But you had to hunt with a microscope to discover in small print the news that the Ford plant had shut down completely in the middle of August and wouldn't reopen any of its departments until after September 6. With the whole steel and iron industry limping along at 13 per cent of capacity, and the building of residences throughout the country barely reaching 11 per cent of the activity in 1929 it is outrageous humbug to talk about "a revival of industrial activity."

If all of this is true, what is the

meaning—if any—of the summer rise in stock values? Is it just a speculative flash, a mere political maneuver to reelect Hoover, or does it indicate something else of deeper significance? In our opinion, the true explanation of the partial recovery of stock prices is to be found in the temporary easing of the worst strain in the history of the American financial system. Note these significant facts:

During the past year the entire financial structure of the United States was near to a terrific crash. President Hoover admitted this in his Washington speech of August 26. He stated on that occasion that foreign governments and citizens had withdrawn \$2,400,000,000 in gold from the United States, and that depositors in this country had withdrawn at one time \$1,600,000,000 in currency and gold for hoarding. And then he made this significant comment, "You know and I know that this foreign exchange, the gold shipped abroad, the currency and gold hoarded in our own country is taken from the base of the inverted pyramid of our credit structure and translates itself into a strangulation of the volume of credit from two to ten times even these huge amounts."

This was the situation a few months ago. Foreign depositors were getting their money out of the country, and foreign investors, fearing a crash of the whole capitalist system, were selling their bonds and stocks for what they could get. Hard pressed banks and investors in this country were likewise throwing their securities on the market. Thus it was not only the decrease in incomes on securities that caused the slump in their market value, but the fear that they would cease to have any earning power at all.

If Hoover and his capitalist supporters had applied to themselves the same doctrine of "self-help" and "rugged individualism" that they were handing out to the workers and farmers, and let the banks, railroads and other corporations shift for themselves, the whole financial system would surely have collapsed. In fact it was collapsing already when the Reconstruction Finance Corporation was hastily set up and began to dole out government funds by tens of millions to banks and other corporations. Hoover now reports that "We have overcome the major financial crisis."

Hoover and his Wall Street supporters have suddenly become optimistic because "the financial crisis is



over." They are telling us over the radio and through the press that there has been a considerable decrease in bank failures during the past six months. They forget to tell us that mercantile and industrial failures increased greatly during the same period. And why did the bank failures decrease? Was it due to any real improvement in economic conditions? Not at all. It was due solely to the fact that the U. S. Government gave wholesale financial aid to failing banks, reaching a climax in the extraordinary loan of \$80,000,000 to Charles Dawes' Central Republic Bank of Chicago two months ago. Between February 2 and June 30 of this year the Reconstruction Finance Corporation loaned to banks and corporations \$1,054,814,486. Of this amount \$642,789,313 went to 3600 banks. Later reports show that they are still handing out government funds to the banks by tens of millions. Even this unparalleled generosity to the banks has not checked the financial crisis entirely as is indicated by the fact that at the end of August the First National Bank of Idaho with a chain of nine subsidiaries in Idaho and Oregon went under with total resources of \$12,753,063.

### Capitalism Not Dead Yet

American capitalism is in a very shaky condition. It is doomed, but far from being dead. As we pointed out in our analysis of the depression appearing in the LABOR AGE of October, 1931, American capitalism has not yet reached its final stage. There are still unexhausted resources available to capitalism in this country. The rise in stock market prices represents in part speculation on these recuperative powers of the present economic system.

It is hardly necessary to point out that even with such a stupid administration as that of Hoover, which blindly opposes all progressive measures, there may be some economic recovery in the course of a year or two. The fact that the cotton crop is considerably smaller than last year and that some other crops appear to be small will probably bring higher prices for these staples, thus increasing the purchasing power of the farm population. The heavy restriction of output of such commodities as copper is preparing the way for higher prices which in turn will lead to increased operations. Then, too, repairs and development work have been kept to the barest minimum during the past two years by such enterprises as the railroads, and some of this work cannot be deferred much longer. Stocks of goods on the shelves of department stores and other middle-

## BOLSHEVISM



From Plebs

"It would be funny to dig up worms for some other bird to eat!"  
 "Yes, as bad as paying rent for a nest!"

men have been considerably reduced so we may expect an increasing demand on factories for some lines of consumers' goods. Despite the widespread unemployment, some elements of the population still have plenty of purchasing power but they have been using it sparingly for two reasons. They have been holding ample reserves to meet the possibility of even worse times ahead, and they have waited for prices to reach rock bottom. The development of an optimistic spirit in financial circles, for whatever reason, will tend to release this purchasing power which will be a real factor stimulating industrial recovery. The Republican administration will undoubtedly use the resources of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and all its tremen-

ous propaganda resources to make the most of these potential factors for recovery, so some improvement would not be surprising. However, as we stated a year ago, such "prosperity" when it does come will be spotted, affecting some industries and areas and passing over others. Moreover, even in the best industries the recovery will not last long unless the capitalists permit measures to be adopted which will cut severely into the profit system.

### What Is To Be Done

If we look facts squarely in the face, the present economic outlook for the United States seems to be about as follows. Despite the speculative flush in financial circles, industrial activity is at a very low level and there is little



likelihood of rapid recovery in the near future if the capitalist system is permitted to follow its natural course. The huge army of 15,000,000 unemployed is just as likely to increase in the coming winter as it is to decrease. Hence the need for bold decisive measures to provide jobs and relief for the unemployed will continue to be imperative. Nothing adequate will be done unless the workers themselves organize on a national scale and exercise irresistible pressure through mass action.

It is not the purpose of this article to outline in detail a program for the unemployed, but it may not be amiss to indicate some of the measures that can be put into effect at once with real benefit to the working class.

### Build Houses

First, a large scale program of public works should be inaugurated without delay. This means not only that much more money should be spent on highways, new school buildings, flood control projects, etc. It means that the whole scope of public activity in industry should be definitely widened. For example, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation should be authorized to furnish at very low rates of interest, or no interest at all, the funds required by municipalities and cooperative housing organizations to wipe out the slums of American cities completely and to furnish to American workers sanitary, comfortable housing at a low cost.

This will never be done by private initiative. There are 528,000 families in New York City alone living in "old law" tenements unfit for human habitation. If the national, state and local governments would cooperate to put through a program of city planning and housing such as is already being carried out in Vienna, for example, that would go far to end the industrial crisis in America. The whole building industry would be put to work on much needed construction. The demand for lumber, steel, concrete, glass, electrical equipment, plumbing and other building materials would put millions to work in basic industries. Railroads and other transportation agencies would get a tremendous impetus. Once the building workers and others in basic industries began to draw regular wages their purchasing power would create the needed demand for all other sorts of commodities.

There is nothing impossible or mysterious about this road to recovery. The only question is, can those in power be pressed hard enough to start the wheels of industry turning? The funds can be raised by increased income and

inheritance taxes and by the sale of bonds. If one half the effort were made to finance industrial recovery and the construction of homes that was thrown into the world war and the destruction of lives there would be no difficulty about the program whatever.

Other types of public works that should be constructed now by city, state and national governments, are electric power stations, and distribution systems to break the strangle hold of the power trust. This need not be limited to water power. Coal can now be utilized very economically in the production of electricity, and this would provide a market for the surplus coal that is causing stagnation in this basic industry. The development of the American power and light industry to the point where it would adequately meet the needs of the entire population, rural as well as city, would provide employment for an army of workers for the next ten years.

The above illustrations indicate that our conception of "public works" needs to be greatly broadened in this crisis, and that by so doing we can really put the unemployed to work producing what the people need.

### Trade With Russia

Soviet Russia is the greatest foreign market in the world. There will be an unlimited demand for machinery and other industrial equipment in that country for years to come. All that stands in the way is recognition and a reasonable extension of credits. The Soviet government has bought hundreds of millions of dollars worth of goods from American industries and never failed to pay its bills. It is now diverting its business to Germany and other countries which are granting better credits and affording reasonable opportunities for marketing Soviet products. Unless high tariff advocates can show that foreign trade should be abandoned altogether it would seem that America is deliberately forfeiting a huge market to satisfy the prejudices of the anti-bolsheviks. Common sense plainly indicates that one of the broad roads to industrial recovery is the development of trade with Soviet Russia.

### Five-Day Week

Even before the depression the view was gaining ground that the time had come for the 5-day week and the 6-hour day in American industry. Unless we are to have a permanent army of unemployed, the work day and work week must be shortened. Most of our industries are geared up to produce much more goods than can be consumed, if they operate on the same basis as they have in the past. There will be

much less insecurity and fear in the mass of the population if the work to be done is spread among all the workers on a regular 30 hour week basis. And this will be an important psychological element in bringing about industrial recovery. Even those who do have purchasing power today are afraid to use it because they fear that they will be in the army of the unemployed tomorrow.

Of course if wages are reduced along with the reduction of working hours that will go far to offset the gains that would otherwise be made. The chief reason for the depression was that the workers were getting such a small percentage of the value of their product in wages that they couldn't buy back the goods in the market. If wages are maintained while hours of labor are cut this will tend to restore the balance in the economic system. It is hardly necessary to add that mere philosophizing about this matter will accomplish little. The workers can maintain their wages only with economic and political power.

### Improvement Is Possible

It is evident that there is a way out of the depression for American capitalism if it will adopt or permit to be put into operation an extensive program of public works, development of trade with Soviet Russia, the five day week and six hour day, unemployment insurance, and other measures of a similar character.

### Adequate Relief

*There is sure to be an enormous army of unemployed this winter.* Hence every Unemployed Citizens League, every Labor Union, every group of workers organized in any way must be prepared to fight for adequate relief. If the capitalist politicians and the business men who control them stubbornly refuse to adopt the simple economic measures that will enable honest men and women to earn their living then they are morally responsible to provide adequate relief.

There is no sound reason whatever why any willing worker or his family should suffer for want of food, clothing, fuel or shelter. Let us demand and fight for this as a minimum. We should make it clear to the local authorities that evictions of families of the unemployed will not be tolerated. We can and will repeatedly point out sound economic measures that would provide employment. If these are not inaugurated we must make it plain by demonstrations, hunger marches and other methods of direct action that *adequate relief* must be forthcoming.



# Storm Over Europe

Berlin, August 11, 1932

by J. B. Matthews

IN last December's issue of *LABOR* AGE I wrote on the prospects for peace under the somewhat alarmist title "Rushing Headlong Toward War." Almost nine months later I see no reason or possibility for revising the general conclusions of that article. The prediction contained therein that the General Disarmament Conference would demonstrate the complete moral bankruptcy of most of the major world powers has been too well fulfilled in spite of the fact that some of the delegates and more of the peace "ballyhoosers" have labored strenuously to show the "gains" of their six months of deliberating and lobbying.

The Von Papen cabinet, speaking through its most important member, Defense Minister Von Schleicher, has recently announced its intention of re-arming Germany if the other nations do not disarm themselves. Furthermore, it will refuse to participate in any further disarmament deliberations unless unmistakable steps are taken by France and others before the re-convening of the Conference. The inequality of status for Germany set up by the Versailles Treaty must be definitely removed before any advance can be made in the direction of lessening the burden of world armaments. Germany's adherence to the Franco-British Entente is purely nominal according to opinion here.

The Lausanne Reparations settlement came five years too late to be of any practical importance in the internal politics of Germany. The sentimental outbursts of the press of America which greeted MacDonald's one-cent-on-the-dollar agreement, declaring that the end of the War had come at last to a stricken Europe, failed utterly to take account of the irreparable cleavages in the German body politic. Bitter and violent class war throughout the German Reich today is a far more important fact for Europe and the world than the shrewd compromise of the wily diplomats at Lausanne.

In the light of this raging class war, the recent elections throughout the Reich are also relatively unimportant. French and American press opinion apparently takes comfort in the belief that Hitlerism has at last reached its peak. On the other side the Soviet press has been jubilant over the 700,000 gain in Communist votes recorded in the polling of July 31. Opinions such as these on both sides are based

on a parliamentary view of the situation and not reached from the standpoint of the philosophy of the class struggle. Class war in Germany has reached a stage too acute for estimating the situation on the basis of any seating of parties in the Reichstag. For many months Germany has been living only under that part of the Weimar Constitution which suspends its republican provisions, i. e., Article 48.

Fanatical Nazis are out for murder. Their orators stop at no limits in announcing their purpose to exterminate their opponents of the working class. Terrorism in East Prussia, Silesia and elsewhere has already taken its grim toll of workers. Nazis have invaded the homes of Communist and Socialist leaders and done them to death with a brutality that reveals the nature of the class struggle here far better than the tabulation of votes.

The decree of Hindenburg setting up special courts for handling terrorists, armed with the severest penalties from which there is no appeal, went into effect yesterday. To expect such courts to administer this severity impartially is out of the question. Their decisions can be expected to do little more than arouse to new fury either side which feels itself wronged. Every penalty announced will serve to identify its victim with the holy cause of his group and thus accentuate the tension and terror it was designed to abolish. In short, there is no way out; and the mounting casualties may be expected shortly to convince the most skeptical that the German bourgeoisie and working class are at war. To what extent the inevitable chaos of Germany will spread over the continent and the world remains the supreme question of international diplomacy.

The Communists have organized a united front movement known as the Anti-Fascist Association. Their press today calls in bold headlines for all anti-fascists to stand at their posts ready for any eventuality. From a reliable source I have learned that Communists are receiving telephone instructions this evening ordering them to their appointed places in anticipation of a Nazi march on Berlin tonight. There is little reason to believe, however, that such a putsch will be attempted at this time. Rumors of an

impending suppression of the Communist Party are flying around. Their difficulties are well illustrated in the story which a friend has just related to me of how they distribute their literature in certain sections of East Prussia. Speeding in a high-powered automobile with an armed guard on the front seat beside the chauffeur, they scatter their leaflets among a hostile population.

The Socialists also have their united front movement known as the Iron Front, whose emblem is a pin of three arrows. This, I am told, can be worn only at the risk of one's life in parts of East Prussia. The three arrows stand for the Party itself, the Free Trade Unions, and the Socialist Sports Organizations. The most important fact affecting the Socialists in the present situation is that they may now give their more undivided attention to Socialism, having been relieved of the embarrassment of their anomalous position in the Weimar Coalition. I am reliably informed that while the leaders of the Communist and Socialist groups remain as far apart as ever, there is a real tendency toward a united front on the part of the rank and file, especially in the smaller communities where survival demands united action against Fascism.

The best that the National Socialists of Adolph Hitler have been able to offer in the way of a program is to announce that "Germany is the home of the Germans." Besides the plain implications of anti-Semitism in this slogan it is the old nationalist palaver of a dying capitalism. A leader of the Nazis in Koenigsburg stated recently that the Nazis desired "to abolish reparations, the Versailles Treaty, Jews and women." Such nonsense could be found only in a country which ranks just above the United States in its political education.

Four discernible elements in the population make up the support which gave more than thirteen million votes to the Nazis in the recent elections. Their financial support is the gift of the big industrialists and financiers who seek to save capitalism by putting aside the pretenses of bourgeois democracy. Fascism is nothing more than capitalism turned nudist; and the putting away of clothes has been a popular cult in post-war Germany. The conservative and individualistic agrarians, especially important in sections like

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# "All Quiet on the Water Front"

by De Profundis

**I**F any further conclusive refutation is needed of the blaring, but cruelly misleading, announcements coming from the Hoover prosperity howlers that "we have turned the corner," and that signs are multiplying everywhere, that the country is emerging from the depression and well on the road to another Hoover (synthetic) prosperity, one only needs to make a casual visit to the waterfront, where steamships are loading and discharging, or rather, used to load and discharge high cargoes of all kinds of merchandise and commodities.

The gloom and quiet of almost complete stagnation has settled upon the docks and piers, the scene, formerly, of never ending hustle and bustle of moving freight by strong-armed longshoremen. Yes,—“all is quiet on the water front.” Not only has foreign commerce come to an almost complete standstill, but also the coastal and inter-coastal freight movement has dwindled to insignificant proportions. The blaringly heralded prosperity of the Hoover psychological type, has not reached the water front as yet. On the contrary, there the stagnation has been, and still is deepening, especially during the past few months.

As an instance: This is supposed to be the busy season for the shipment of dried and preserved fruit from Pacific Coast ports. In former years extra ships had to be put into the service on the route through the Panama Canal in order to transport the huge shipments to the Atlantic ports, mostly for reshipment to Europe and other parts of the world. The volume of freight of this kind coming this season is negligible, and not one half of the cargo space of the regular liners is taken up with it. The same, or worse, conditions prevail in other lines of ocean freight transportation. If, as the big newspapers continue to report, car loadings are increasing, the increase has not been noticeable on the water front. There, the loadings and unloadings are still decreasing.

Steamships that used to come in with 8,000 or 10,000 tons of freight consisting of all kinds of merchandise, the unloading of which would always give several hundred longshoremen employment for three or four days, with a few night hours thrown in for good measure, and which used to take a similar huge cargo out again, now arrive with a couple of hundred tons at the most, and leave again in the

same condition. It is not unusual that a big combination passenger and freight carrier arrives and leaves again, without a pound of freight in her holds, carrying only passengers and mail.

That the lot of the longshoremen, who depend for a livelihood upon the hard and taxing work of loading and unloading these ships, boats, lighters and vessels of all kinds, is not a happy one under such conditions may readily be seen. Even the earnings of the few who still have the better run of the work have dwindled to very low figures. Many call themselves lucky when they catch one or two days' work a week, but thousands of others tramp the water front day after day, from one pier to another, in a vain search for a few hours casual employment.

Even in so-called prosperous times, longshore work, being casual labor, offers the men following this kind of work but a very insecure and dependable livelihood. Earnings of the longshoremen are influenced by a number of unforeseen factors, from the temper and the goodwill of the hiring stevedore to the conditions of wind and weather and the stand of the ocean tides. Besides, it is listed by casualty insurance companies as one of the most hazardous occupations.

In spite of these disadvantages, or possibly, because of them, the longshoremen have always maintained a very noticeable spirit of independence, although much of this carefree spirit has been lost as a result of the terrible unemployment. Occasionally this rebellious spirit broke out on rather slight provocation, and often resulted in so-called unauthorized strikes and tie-ups, which often gave the officials of the union considerable trouble to straighten matters out again. Since the Union got control of the work and annual agreements were concluded between the employers and workers, not only a uniform rate of hourly wages, but also certain working rules are set up, which must be observed by the stevedores. This recognition of the union by the employers, the steamship companies and the contracting stevedores, has improved the conditions of the longshoremen considerably. But it has also given into the hands of the leaders of the union, the presi-

dent, the business agents and others, a most powerful weapon, not so much against dishonest and unreliable employers, as against rebellious or recalcitrant members of the union.

Much has been exposed lately of racketeering and gangsterism in the trade unions. Labor leaders use their position and the power gained, for selfish purposes, for their own enrichment and aggrandizement, often at a terrible cost to the membership of their unions. To say that this is non-existent in the organizations of the waterfront workers, is to make a statement that is far from the truth. The longshoremen can sing a song of graft and corruption within their union, of gangsterism, favoritism, dishonesty and abuse of dictatorial powers and undisguised treachery. If these have not been exposed as much as in some of the other trade unions, it is because of the prevailing lack of interest in organization matters among longshoremen generally. Their lack of interest in their union is shown by the small attendance at the union meetings. Except on very rare occasions, the meetings of local unions show an average attendance of 12 or 15 members out of a membership of between 500 to 1,000.

But it is not alone a lack of interest, that keeps the members away from the meetings. Questionable tactics and sometimes systematically applied terror methods, create a feeling of disgust, in some instances even of fear in the membership. Some of the officials intentionally foster this feeling of disgust in the members, to keep them away from the meetings, so that they and their immediate following can have things all their own way. Matters in the union of the longshoremen have developed to such a state, that the average longshoreman looks upon the union as something outside of and hostile to him, something to which he has to pay tribute in return for a meagre chance at very uncertain employment.

Under such a state of affairs, together with the terrible unemployment prevailing, it is with grave misgivings that those among them who are still showing a little active interest in the affairs of the organization, look upon the future of the organization and especially on the coming wage negotiations. A new agreement has to be concluded by the first of October when

(Continued on Page 26)



# Notes on the Convention

Friday Night, Sept. 2

by Tess Huff

SOME of the delegates to the CPLA convention, which begins tomorrow, came in this afternoon, and they are looking around. New York City. The lights. The crowds. In Union Square they have a sardonic laugh at an inscription which encircles the base of a flag-pole. Eighteen men are sleeping on the base, made of concrete, their legs pointing outward like the spokes of a giant wheel. "How little do my fellow countrymen know," runs the legend, quite unmindful of the wretched sleepers, "what precious blessings they are in possession of and which no other people on earth enjoy—Thomas Jefferson." And immediately the delegates realize that they are still in the United States. They look for places to sit down and are doubly convinced: all the benches are filled. A few men sleep sitting up but most of them are stretched out, their heads on folded newspapers, caps, coats. The square looks like a recent battlefield.

The delegates feel at home. America—land of plenty hunger. And they work out a new inscription for the flag-pole and bring it up to date this way:

"How little do my thirteen million unemployed countrymen know what precious blessings they deprive themselves of by apathy and submission and which no other people on earth enjoy save the Russian—Herbert Hoover."

Saturday

And it is in this spirit, in a country like this, next day, that the delegates convene.

The delegates are men and women organizers and leaders of unemployed leagues, farmers' leagues, hunger marches, unions, CPLA branches, opposition groups, independent political groups, and secret cells in unorganized steel. They are American militants, here to be heard, and to hammer out a program.

As the convention opens one question hangs fire before the 91 delegates: what politically? Will the Conference for Progressive Labor Action become another party?

"The average person has not yet abandoned the view that our system is somehow good and solvent," says J. B. S. Hardman, National Executive Com-

mittee member reporting on future trends in the labor movement. "There is no revolutionary situation yet at hand. But the situation is loaded with explosives to the roof. Our function is to see that confidence in the existing system is undermined, not stabilized. We must have no single-track method. Our business is to be organized. We must fit into every situation. We are not wedded to any notion or organization except the idea that there must be a revolution, the idea there must be organization."

A delegate is on the floor. The discussion begins.

"We've got to work with the workers, not at them. Talk to them in their own language, in the words that mean something to them, and not in the language of Union Square."

"The comrade is right, of course, but the question is, we need a mass labor party."

"There are a lot of book revolutionists." This is Larry Hogan from the South. "But we have people who want us to come and help them. You don't have to have books. You must get down in the ditch with the workers. Build a solid foundation right on the ground.... We need a farmer-labor party."

"Comrade chairman, the CPLA has a specific job to perform." This is Sam Bakely, leader in 1931 Lawrence strike. "A mass labor party, yes, but now we are few — agitate, yes, but we've got to go ahead and work in the fields where we can do the most, in industrial situations, in organizing the unemployed."

"Fellow workers!" This is Louis Budenz, N.E.C. secretary. "We are not messiahs with holy oil on our heads and white robes flowing at our feet come to save the workers. We renounce that approach. We work with the workers, not at them!"

A CPLAer from the steel mills of Ohio:

"Let's not get excited about a mass labor party because we're not going to have one right away."

Anna Kula from the needle trades:

"Help the workers now. Don't mind the future. They will follow you then if you do the real job now."

Eddy Ryan, Jr., Philadelphia:

"The CPLA in proportion to its size has done more than any other labor group in the past year. We have come to the cross-roads. We may lose members, but coming out for a party will strengthen us immensely."

"Comrades, this talk about parties. Parties? Where are they? Christ! There are no parties. A lot of names!" And Joseph Brooks, delegate from Paterson, N. J., veteran of many organization campaigns, many strikes, makes his point.

"Parties have been bouncing in and out of Paterson for 30 years. Why, we have 19 different brands. Over 25 years ago the labor vote in this country reached the highmark of 6 and one-tenth per cent of the total. Eight years later the vote had dropped to less than 1 per cent."

"Still they keep bouncing in."

"One day you meet your friend on the street, and he says to you: 'Come on, Jim, stick with labor, join the Socialist Party.' You don't want to be a dub, so you join the party. Six months later you meet your friend again. 'What party are you with?' he asks. 'What party am I with?' you say, surprised, 'why, the Socialist Party.' 'What? The Socialist Party? That bunch of traitors? Come on, Jim, join a real labor party, the S.L.P.' Well, you don't want to be a dub, so you join the S. L. P. Six months later you meet your friend again. 'What party are you with, Jim?' he asks. 'What party am I with?' you say, sort of surprised, 'why, didn't you get me to join the S. L. P.?' 'What? That bunch of fakers? Christ! Come on, Jim, join a real workers' party.' 'Which one?' you ask. 'The Communists,' he says. 'The Communists,' you say, 'which group?'"

"Yes, they keep bouncing in."

"Budenz and Muste bounced in one day. 'Holy smoke,' we say, 'what bouncers are these?' But they stuck. They went to the can with us. They took it on the chin with us. They were there in the big strike and they are still there. It is the first time in the history of Paterson it ever happened. All the others bounced out. The CPLA has stuck."

Sunday

There are eight miners, five from the anthracite, and three from West Virginia,—Boots Scherer, Clum Ball and Walter Seacrist. Seacrist, leader of the

miners' hunger march on the state capitol, tells the story:

How a thousand miners marched into Charleston and were well fed on Splash Beach. The governor's big car came for the committee. "We told the governor we were doing all right on Splash Beach. He'd send us to jail if we didn't leave, he said. That was his business." They got relief.... Then the big general committee organized to bring the miners back on another hunger march.... This time not to be nice..... They are about ready to come into Charleston this time to kick in the windows and take what they want, rather than starve..... "The people want to go..... Everyday people starve to death in West Virginia.... The workers in the mines do have to come out in the evening and hunt for relief."

There are five delegates from steel centers. Elmer Cope tells the story.

"Steel—a conglomerate mass of men who have always taken it for granted that rugged individualism could get them what they wanted. And it used to do just that. But now, in Pittsburgh, heart of steel, half the workers are totally unemployed, half of the balance are working a few days a month. We were forced to turn to the unemployed. We don't stress self-help; the workers there must turn to the city, county and state.

"At least 200,000 in Alleghany County are totally unemployed and that many more are working part time. Three times last year the state and county treasuries were completely exhausted. Two months ago 35,000 families were on relief. They get \$3 a week per family.

"This winter, in many communities, hell will break loose. We've got to be there on the ground floor and guide them into a unified class-conscious movement."

"In Allentown, Pa.," says Larry Heimbach, leader of the Unemployed Citizens League there (they have collected many a bushel of peaches and potatoes), "we don't attack other groups, we simply beat them on the job. We have Communists in our League, even, because we are the only ones doing the job. If your work does not convince the workers, no use to use words."

In Smith Township, Ohio, 200 unemployed workers captured the office of the trustees and proceeded to organize a council.... A good militant method.... B. C. Bauhof tells the story.... Now they demand the use of public buildings and get them....

"Take the case of the unemployed to the city officials at once, for it's a good way, these days, of disillusioning the workers in city officials."

Thirty-three unemployed units with 6,300 members, all done in five weeks, is the Belmont County, Ohio, record, told by William Truax and George Perkins. Two workers called on the country commissioners... got nothing... sent out a convention call... 70 odd men gathered from all parts of the county.... five weeks later the organization numbered 6,300. That's another way of doing it.

In Paterson, as in Allentown, the Unemployed League were built through mass meetings.

## Open Night

Well, two days of the convention are gone and here it is Sunday night; let's finish the committee work and get to the CPLA "open night" meeting on time, sing some labor songs, see a labor skit, and hear the speakers.

Larry Hogan tells about Southern textile workers and farmers. The people down there are ready to fight and they are crying for leadership.

And now listen to this man from the steel mills of Pennsylvania.

"I saw a man who used to get \$40 a day. He was on a breadline.

"They are modernizing a mill, a mill that used to work 5,000 men, and when it is finished, all the machinery installed, it will work 4,200 less men, and turn out three times more steel.

"Workers out my way will soon raise Cain of their own kind. The rank and file want organization, and we have organized the Brotherhood of the Mills, working cautiously, sometimes slowly, but building effectively and permanently."

Ernest Rice McKinney, a Negro from Pittsburgh, speaks. He tells the audience that it is not because the Negro is a black man that he has problems; but because he is a poor man, and that you get what you are strong enough to take.

Then Boots Scherer, a fiery leader of the West Virginia Mine Workers' Union. He is warmed up by a labor song—The West Virginia Hills—and turned loose. And turned loose means turned loose.

He tells about the Armed March, three hunger marches, Walker, John L. Lewis, the wrecking of the U.M.W. of A. in the Kanawha Valley by a reactionary leadership, the painful rebuilding of the independent union, the coming of CPLA, Muste and Tip-

pett, the 1931 strike, the building of a miners' labor party....

"Today, in the union, we have approximately 26,000 men, 13 locals in Logan County, 14 in Mingo County, places where they used to shoot miners for talking union. And I want to say, in conclusion, the CPLA is the only organization I have ever found which comes in and stays and gives everything it's got."

## Monday

The last day of the convention; the committees have reported; a constitution has been adopted; A. J. Muste has been re-elected executive chairman, Louis F. Budenz, executive secretary; a new NEC of 22 members has been chosen and the convention draws to a close. Fire-works, humor, hard work, results—much has happened that these notes don't cover.

For instance, on January 1 a new paper will be lambasting the president-elect, the rule of the bankers, the government's hunger policy, and telling what the workers are doing about it—*Labor Action*, a C.P.L.A. weekly. Money to do it? \$572 was pledged, \$78.90 given in cash. A war veteran gave his pension check. That's loyalty to your government! Of course much more is needed before *Labor Action* comes out but the campaign for funds is on and....

A delegate is on the floor.

"The thing that is most important is action. If we act—act in a class-conscious way—we'll be doing the job."

The resolutions have been read... Mooney, Billings, Centralia prisoners, Scottsboro Negroes, Harlan miners, class-war victims, cooperatives, Consumers Research, the A.F. of L. and racketeering, the Soviet Union, and fraternal greetings to the Progressive Illinois Miners' Union.... The convention draws to a close....

"We must tell the workers our program, ask them to come with us and give us power."

But now Chairman Muste is speaking:

"The last doubt has vanished: we see that the aims, the methods, the tactics of the CPLA are realistic—not taken from the moon-lit air, but evolved from experience. It is a program, a make-up, that I am prepared to give myself to with complete devotion. There are hundreds, thousands, millions who are waiting to join us to work for a workers' republic." And with these words the first convention of the CPLA is adjourned.



# Notes from the Steel Districts

by Lem Strong

Another wave of wage cutting is starting in the steel industry. Sheet and Tin mill men in plants of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube, American Sheet and Tin Plate, and other plants of U. S. Steel subsidiaries have been handed additional slashes of over 10 per cent.

At the New Castle, Pa., plant of the American Sheet and Tin Plate, the rollers called their crews together and told them that as soon as they picked up their tongs, they would be working under a ten per cent cut and that anyone who didn't like it could go home. One of these days they will, but they'll all go home together.

At last the unemployed in the steel centers are beginning to realize the need for organization, and with the cooperation of the CPLA they are organizing Unemployed Citizens Leagues to defend their common interests as unemployed working people.

Such organizations have been formed in Austin Township, Weatherfield Township, Hubbard and in other places in Ohio. They are located near large steel towns such as Youngstown and Niles, and are spreading rapidly as workers in other communities observe their effective work and realize the need for such organization in their own towns. In Youngstown itself, several groups of workers are laying plans for a large scale drive for organization of the unemployed in the near future. In Pittsburgh, similar plans are being laid. In New Castle, Pa., a United Unemployed Council has been formed to deal with the problem of organizing the unemployed.

CPLA organizers and sympathizers have received requests from many communities for help and advice in forming Unemployed Leagues. Spontaneous organization in all parts of the country show that the American worker is tired of the way in which his misery has been disregarded, and that he is determined to do something about it.

It would seem that at this stage of the game, almost everybody would realize the need for the 6-hour day in industry. A while ago, the sheet mill men at the Campbell plant of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube were asked to vote on the question of a 6-hour shift. The men were wise enough to see the need for such a step and 358 of them voted for the 6-hour day, only 52 voting against it. That was several months ago and it hasn't been put into effect yet. When the men inquired

about it, the superintendent told them that the system wouldn't be introduced until business picked up and prosperity came back. The Sheet and Tube has an employee representative plan which is supposed to protect the workers' rights. Without any power, the representatives were unable to do anything when they took up this case.

Since 1927, the U. S. Steel Corporation has cut its total wage and salary bill by over \$100,000,000.

The American Sheet and Tin Plate Co., mighty U. S. Steel subsidiary, is modernizing its plant at Vandergrift, Pa. According to reliable information, the plant which now employs 5,000 men at full capacity will hire only 800 men when the job is finished to turn out three times as much product as the 5,000 do now.

A short time ago, the men on the cold strip mill of the Wheeling Steel Co. plant at Yorkville, O., got their third 10 per cent cut.

But that wasn't all. The company did not even bother to tell the men about it, so that the first notice the men had was when they saw the shortage in their pay checks. They went to the boss and he told them about the cut.

There is a law in Ohio against such a high handed way of doing business but Wheeling Steel evidently considers itself above the Law. And as long as the men stay unorganized, it is.

The flood of new machinery and improved processes continues to sweep away jobs. At the Niles, O., plant of the Republic Steel a new semi-continuous mill has been installed which displaces 48 skilled men to join the rest already walking the streets.

Progressives in the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers' affiliated with the A. F. of L., are meeting with some success in their campaign to make the union a real fighting organization in the industry. The results of the nominating election, reveal that the entire progressive slate won a big victory over the old guard. If the progressives can maintain this lead in the actual elec-

tions and then undertake serious consideration of the organization of the unorganized, a big impetus may be given to organization of the steel industry.

It is always dangerous to prophesy but it is a fairly safe prediction to make that within another month or two, another general wage cut will be forced over on the steel mill workers. The Brotherhood of the Mills has been extending its contacts into the unorganized mills over a wide area, contacting the key people who realize the need for combined effort, with a view to building a strong, all inclusive progressive organization of steel mill men, so that a fighting instrument may be forged to combat the wage cutting flood.

One of the ways in which workingmen can be gypped is shown by the experience of the men working at the Cold Metal Process Plant in Youngstown. They are now about five months back in their pay because the company claims it has no money. Now the company is trembling on the verge of ruin and the employees are wondering whether anything will come to them for their work.

According to official company figures, 60 per cent of the men who are working at the Holt Mills of the Republic Steel at Warren, O., are getting less than \$20 every two weeks.

The relief situation in Youngstown is becoming desperate. At the present time, in spite of community gardens, industrial self help schemes and other make-shifts, the number of families on direct city relief has just risen to 8,000, representing about 40,000 inhabitants. In addition there are 18,000 individuals eating at the city soup kitchens daily, thus making a total of about 58,000 citizens in a city of 170,000 absolutely dependent on charity. What the situation will be when winter comes can be imagined.

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# The I. L. P. Leaves the British Labor Party

## AGAINST DISAFFILIATION

The Independent Labor Party's recent decision to disaffiliate itself from the British Labor Party is regrettable for many reasons. In the first place, instead of carrying over a united party, the I.L.P. itself has already split. The conference voting was not indicative of the strength of the membership wishing to retain affiliation with the Labor Party. Already the dissentients (and they include some of the most influential members) are calling conferences. The "Forward" (Glasgow) and its editor, Tom Johnson, fought the move right from the beginning. The "New Leader" looks likely to lose its position of influence to the rejuvenated "Clarion" which is now being issued weekly instead of monthly. If the dissenters in the I.L.P. do not set up a new organization they may decide to enter S.S.I.P. (Socialist Society for Inquiry and Propaganda), the new research and propagandist body centering around G. D. H. Cole.

Other reasons, stated in summary form are:

(1) The confusion which will arise when the I.L.P. runs rival candidates to those of the Labor Party and the Communist Party in local and national elections, and when the I.L.P. lines up with the reactionaries in the trade unions in refusing to pay the political levy which constitutes the basis of the Labor Party's treasury.

(2) The apparently unimportant point which caused the break. Few people sympathize with the desire of the I.L.P. to remain in the Labor Party and yet have power to oppose it in the House of Commons in defiance of majority decisions previously made. It seems foolish also to make this an issue when, as at present, the I.L.P. and the Labor Party vote unitedly as the opposition and the Standing Order which is the bone of contention, is not likely to operate until again there is a Labor Government.

(3) If the I.L.P. were coming out to become a clear-cut propagandist body it would have a case, but apparently it intends to run candidates and head up oppositions in the trade unions.

(4) Just now there is a tremendous swing from the National Government which has lost in the bye elections 40 per cent of its electoral support.

The Labor Party and the unions, judging by resolutions and plans proposed for public ownership of banking and credit, swing leftward. Greenwood, Lansbury and Scripps are forthright in their speeches against trying to repeat

We publish herewith several comments on the disaffiliation of the I.L.P. in Great Britain from the Labor Party. It is impossible at this distance and with the material now available to pass a final judgment on this development. The CP LA stands strongly for the policy of left-wing groups working within the mass organizations. There come times, however, when a clean break is the only way out. Certainly the criticisms leveled against the Labor Party by the I.L.P. are abundantly justified. The British Labor movement needs the courage, the militancy and the revolutionary fervor of the I.L.P. We extend greetings to our I.L.P. comrades and earnestly hope that their work will go forward with more success than ever.—Editor.

the cleaning up of capitalism's mess as a minority government. They are adopting many of the ideas previously championed by the Independent Labor Party. The only difference between the Labor Party and the I.L.P. seems to be one, not in aim, but in the tempo of achievement. This has been complicated by personalities incapable of team work. If the latter difficulty could have been overcome, there seems no reason why the I.L.P. should not have continued its work as a ginger group in the federation of Trade Unions and Socialist Societies, constituting the Labor Party. The parliamentary candidates' organization is pressing for more vigorous action. Already the Textile Unions are on strike. The miners are getting together to resuscitate their old demands for nationalization of the mines. The "Means Test" provokes daily more detestation of the National Government which is not assuaged by the excessive publicity given to the shop window premier.

Altogether, it seems an inopportune moment for the I.L.P. to abandon the policy laid down by Keir Hardie and to try to build up Socialism apart from the mass of the workers organized in the Labor Party.

MARK STARR

## FOR DISAFFILIATION

By 241 votes to 142 the I. L. P. disaffiliated from the British Labor Party at a Special Conference held in Jowett Hall, Bradford. The hall and the town have a significance in I. L. P. history. The hall is named after one of the pioneers of the party, F. W. Jowett, Treas-

urer of the I.L.P., still active in service to the Party. Bradford was the scene of the birth of the I. L. P. in 1893.

The I. L. P. decision is deserving of attention from the American Labor movement and the CPLA in particular, in view of the agitation for a Labor Party in which the CPLA would function as a spearhead of a militant wing, closely paralleling the function of the I. L. P.

The I. L. P. was formed in 1893, to induce all working class organizations to form their own party and to inspire all class conscious workers to unite in the I. L. P. who as a body would work inside the mass workers' party, enthusing it, inspiring it to Socialism.

Seven years later the I. L. P. played a prominent part in forming the Labor Representation Committee (note the similarity of policy of Conference for Progressive Labor Action) which in 1906 became the Labor Party.

In the following years the I. L. P. played a dual role, building up its own organization of devoted class-conscious workers welded together in a party that gave its all unflinchingly with a loyalty scarcely equalled by any organization. They fought the whole organized forces of Money Power, Press, Pulpit and Renegade Labor Leaders and the mad period of the Great War was the crucial testing point through which the I. L. P. remained true to its faith. By every means in its power the I. L. P. opposed the capitalist war. Over 6,000 of the I. L. P. went to jail, its papers were suppressed, its meetings prohibited, its property confiscated, but the I. L. P. won through to become the most vital party in Britain today.

Side by side with the task of building its own party the I. L. P. brought the Labor Party into a functioning organization. Trades Unions took the advice of the I. L. P. and formed their own political party. The Fabians, the Social Democratic Federation and the Cooperative Parties joined the Trades Unions in one great Labor Party, and twice within recent years the Labor Party has been a government in Great Britain. The I. L. P. claims the credit of placing the Labor Party in the center of the stage of world politics.

In view then, of the traditions, history, and accomplishments of the I. L. P. the decision of the I. L. P. to disaffiliate from the Labor Party would be no light and foolish undertaking.

The Labor Party is not a party of individual members who have democratic power to change its leadership and policy. Fourteen years ago the Labor Party open-



ed itself to individual membership, but members have no effective rights within the organization.

The Labor Party is chiefly an association of organizations represented by delegates appointed from the official machine of these organizations and not elected by rank and file members. Rank and filers may do the work of the party, but they are powerless to determine its policy.

In this form of loose-knit organizations, the I. L. P. believes that such an organization can only function if there is an agreement on main principles among associated organizations, and that reasonable liberty must be allowed for expression of beliefs.

In this form of organization the contribution of the I. L. P. has been Socialism. Up to the war the I. L. P. had always expressed its independent views within the Labor Party.

During the war the I. L. P. and the L. P. pursued opposite policies. The I.L.P. reaffirmed its declaration against war and determinedly fought against the war. The L. P. supported the capitalist war and the Coalition Government, and Labor M.P.s, including the present Chairman of the L.P., Arthur Henderson, accepted Cabinet responsibility. The I.L.P. still remained in the L. P. though diametrically opposed to the policies of the L.P. because at that time no attempt to restrict the freedom of expression of the I. L. P. within the official L.P. was attempted.

If an effort had been made by the L.P. to restrict the expression of the I. L. P. beliefs, the I. L. P. would have had no hesitation in breaking away from the L.P.

After the war, due to the untiring agitation of the I. L. P. an intense militant spirit was displayed by the workers of Britain.

The 40-hours strike was declared which assumed large proportions. The intense militancy of the workers expressed itself in direct action. Lloyd George, then Prime Minister, became so alarmed that he expressed the thought that revolution had come. In important industrial centers (as personally witnessed in Glasgow) huge concentration of troops took place. Bombing planes soared aloft, artillery and tanks rumbled through the streets and machine-guns were set up in all public places. Pitched bloody battles took place between police and strikers.

Overawed by the display of armed force leaders called off the strike. Though the strike was broken, many strikers remained out for days. At this stage Britain's discharged and returning soldiers received their bonus, a sop thrown to them through the fear of revolt.

Responding to the agitation of the

I. L. P. a tremendous political swing went to the L.P. For the first time in history, the L.P. became the official opposition in Parliament. I.L.P. members who had gone to jail in the war years, who stood for Parliamentary seats were returned by overwhelming majorities.

Parliament was short lived and dissolved. The I.L.P. and the L.P. stumped the country demanding power. The workers responded magnificently and in 1924 the L.P. returned as a minority government.

In this government the I.L.P. found itself voting against the Labor Government. The I.L.P., however, regarded this government as an experiment and since freedom was allowed to express the I.L.P. view, and to vote and work for that view, the I.L.P. remained in the L.P.

Standing Orders were adopted by the Parliamentary L.P. which prohibited the I.L.P. members from voting differently from the L.P. The I.L.P. was no longer to be able to express its own convictions. It was to forego its own policies when they conflicted with the non-socialist policies of the L.P.

This was the period when the I.L.P.s were denounced as extremists, left-wingers, wild men from the red Clyde, etc. Then came the second Labor Government, proving actually more timorous and worse than the previous Labor Government.

This Labor Government, again in power on the declared wish of the people for a change in the social and economic system, became an apologetic, timid reform government. I.L.P. members rebelled against the Standing Orders of the Parliamentary Labor Party because they required the I.L.P. to refrain from voting against legislation which was a betrayal of the working-class.

Labor Party leaders have never gauged the real militancy of the workers of whom Lenin said when in London in 1903, "Socialism is simply oozing from them but their leaders talk rot." The workers gave power to the L.P. not for palliatives, but for a decisive change. The militancy of the unions led to the general strike. Again the workers declared for decisive action and struck in a most amazing exhibition of solidarity.

In face of this decisive demand of organized militancy the leaders of the Trade Union Congress and the L. P. proved inept, timid and weak. The strike was suddenly called off without authorization of union membership, delegate conference, referendum, etc., and the working class of Britain realized they had been betrayed.

The I.L.P. demanded in face of the militancy of the working class that a minority government introduce Socialist solutions to the problems of the time

and challenge the capitalist representatives to oppose them.

The Labor Government accepted the demands of the capitalists that it would only remain in office so long as it administered Capitalism. A workers' government, the I.L.P. declared, would have fought the demands of the financial interests and insisted that the needs of the workers come first.

The Labor Government imprisoned 60,000 Indians who demanded self-government, thereby opposing the pledges of both the L.P. and the I.L.P. The Labor Government appointed commission after commission, in every case packed with capitalists, instead of, as the I.L.P. demanded, experts from the workers' parties. The Labor Government, in spite of bitter opposition, appointed the Capitalist representative, Sir George May, on the reactionary Economy Committee.

The Labor Government accepted this Economy Report and reduced the standards of life of the workers to maintain the unearned income of the capitalist class.

The Labor Government accepted the principle of the Means Test for the unemployed poor. It did not remove the Anomalies of the Unemployed Insurance which has resulted in the denial of benefits to hundreds of thousands of unemployed.

The Labor Government has betrayed, sold and exploited the working classes just as previous capitalist governments and left the workers dismayed and disillusioned and secure as ever in the chains of bondage. In the pendulum swing of reaction a Tory government again swept into political power.

The moment for decision for the I.L.P. had come. A fundamental difference in viewpoint expressed through the medium of Standing Orders had been exposed. The L.P. believes, in spite of a faint declaration for Socialism in the far-off future, in reformist measures within the Capitalist system. The L.P. is helping to prolong, and to salvage Capitalism, in the hopes that a milder form of Capitalism will be more humane and more progressive.

The I.L.P., at its Easter convention, reaffirmed its faith in Socialist remedies and in the necessity for an entire change from the capitalist social and economic system.

This convention instructed the N.E. of the I.L.P. to negotiate with the L.P. over their fundamental differences. The L.P. refused to negotiate unless Standing Orders were accepted, and stated that they desired a revision of rules.

Acting on an almost unanimous resolution the N. E. of the I.L.P. issued a

call for a special delegate conference, to act on the definite resolution that the I.L.P. disaffiliate from the L.P.

After having the N.E. resolution in the branches for over three months, delegates were elected by the branches to attend the Special Conference which was more representative of membership and branches than any conference held in the last five years and the number of delegates in attendance exceeded that of the last two Annual Conferences. It was in an atmosphere tense with expectation after debates of considerable merit that the I.L.P. took the greatest decision of its life.

The Capitalist press states, "Great was the enthusiasm, shrill the cheers when the verdict for disaffiliation was announced. The Red Flag was sung vociferously, flags and banners were waved aloft in a tumultuous scene." The "New Leader," official organ of the I. L. P., reports such tremendous enthusiasm displayed as was never witnessed before.

A new path opens to the I.L.P. It proposes to work, not to wait. It does not believe, like the L.P., that it has to wait until the workers are ready for Socialism. That is the basic point of difference. The L.P. achieved power as the spokesman of the workers and yet carried on while in power anti-socialist work. That is destructive of working-class confidence and morale.

The I.L.P. believes that it once again

can rally the workers to the fight and lead them to victory. Already a new spirit is evident. New recruits are pouring in. New branches are being opened.

The entire official machinery still remains with the I.L.P. Old stalwarts, like Willie Stewart, Wallhead, Jowett, are still with the party and the "New Leader" is bigger, stronger and more vigorous than ever.

The strange alignment and space devoted to the attacks on the I.L.P. for its decisions by Capitalist, Labor, and so-called Socialist papers is illuminating. All are unanimous in letting the public know the I.L.P. has completely destroyed itself.

The "Daily Herald," with its Labor associations, but with its capitalist control has equalled, if not excelled, the most reactionary Tory scandal sheet in a campaign of misrepresentation and distortion of facts.

In Glasgow, the red district of Scotland, a monster demonstration was recently addressed by James Maxton, M.P.; G. Buchanan, M.P.; John McGovern, M.P.; and others. It was attended by thousands. Yet the "Daily Herald" did not devote a single line of space to it, but carried an extended report of a meeting of a dissentient minority group in Edinburgh and Glasgow attended by a few hundred.

The "Daily Herald" broadcasts that at the special conference many prominent

leaders left the conference hall on the second day and refused to return, yet the official conference supplement of the "New Leader" reports only two delegates. J. P. Dolan and Mr. E. F. Wise absented themselves on the final day, and at the conclusion of the conference the entire delegation joined in the singing of the Red Flag and departed amid tumultuous scenes of enthusiasm.

The "Daily Herald" declares that out of 48 members on the Glasgow Town Council, only 7 obeyed the I.L.P. call, but the 48 were never I.L.P.s and only by a wide stretch of imagination could many of the 48 even be called Labor Men.

An almost complete survey of all I.L.P. branches made by the N.E., and reported on in the "New Leader," shows that branches are rallying with unanimity in support of the Conference decisions. In the London District where exists the largest number of branches the survey shows that of 90 branches, 70 are in agreement with the new I.L.P. policy either unanimously or by overwhelming majority. Of the remaining 20 all except 3 will remain I.L.P. branches, in most cases with an actual majority of present members. And so throughout the country, loyalty is the word.

The I.L.P. is by no means dead or in the wilderness.

WM. BEEDIE.

## Statement of I. L. P. Club in New York

THE secession of the Independent Labor Party from the L.P. is a subject of international discussion of working class interest, and as is often the case, the first thing to be discussed is whether the leaving of the L.P. is the proper move to be taken by the I.L.P.

Even amongst members of the I.L.P. we find a difference of opinion. This is, of course, as it should be. The fact that members of the I.L.P. contend that leaving the L.P. is a mistake gives cheer, at least to followers of the working class movement here in the United States, that the Labor Party is not all bad. These members believe that the Labor Party can be of service to the working class. That it can be used for the overthrow of the present system and the establishment of a Socialist Commonwealth.

On the other hand the secessionists claim there is no hope of breaking through to Socialism with the Labor Party. Their argument is based upon the performance of the Labor Government and the performance of the ex-Labor Statesmen in the present so-called National Government.

The Leaders of the Labor Party, after a life time of association with it, selling their principles for what it brought, gave a nasty shock to the hope of the workers for a square deal from any party.

The I.L.P. sought freedom from the Standing Orders to allow themselves to register protest against any measure

that violated their Socialist principles. This after prolonged discussion, was denied them.

The affiliationists claim the Bradford Conference was not representative of the I.L.P. in spite of the fact that the branches were circularized in plenty of time to prepare and send delegates. They also inject into their argument a great deal of sentimentality about the aims of Kier Hardie. They tell in their speeches and writings what course Hardie would take if he were alive today. It would have been much more beneficial to the movement if these same people could have foretold what course MacDonald would take in 1931. At least their contentions would have received a test in MacDonald's case.

They are also yelling for unity, blaming the secessionists for most of the trouble and for destroying the unity of the working class movement, while they themselves are (in Scotland at any rate) forming a new "Socialist Party" to affiliate with the L.P. in place of the I.L.P. If as is claimed by the dissenting members of the I.L.P., the Labor Party is a Socialist Party, why the necessity of a new Socialist Party?

Whether the proper step has been taken by the secessionists, or by those who will form a new Socialist Party, we must wait and see. It will give stimulus to Socialist propaganda as both sections advocate a propaganda party.

We of the I.L.P. club in New York believe in the action of the I.L.P. in leaving the Labor Party. We do not say we are right but we believe we are.



# News From Workers . . .

## *The U. S. Congo Concrete Gangs*

By HENRY FLURY

Charges of brutality in United States river labor camps are agitating Memphis, Tennessee and vicinity and as usual are leading to the stereotyped "investigations" by the city authorities, American Legion and U. S. Engineers' Office. Revetments along the Mississippi to prevent overflow are under construction. Millions of dollars are being spent on this work and thousands of men employed. It is of vital importance that the public should know just what is going on in these hells called "camps," under the direct control of the federal government.

According to the sworn affidavits of at least fourteen men conditions are as bad as those in the Congo in Africa under the beneficent King Leopold of Belgium. According to the Memphis Commercial Appeal of August 13, Major Brehon Somerville, district engineer in charge of river work at Osceola and Butler, Arkansas, stated: "Our jobs are hard work with pick and shovel and it takes a tough man to perform that kind of labor for 10 or 11 hours a day under the hot sun. Those who are soft can't stand it."

The Commercial Appeal of August 14 quotes Dr. W. H. Slaughter, commanding officer at the Marine Hospital near the site of the work as saying: "There were about 17 men admitted (to the hospital) from the plant at Osceola Friday — about six of them were suffering from concrete burns and only one of these was white." The implication here is that inhuman treatment is justified if confined to Negroes. Dr. Slaughter "did not have time" to look up the names of the men who were admitted to the hospital suffering from concrete burns nor was a reporter allowed to visit any of the men.

Marion F. Parker, 36, who said he had been working on the river project most of the time since 1920 has filed an affidavit with the Legion investigation committee. At his home, when interviewed, he declared that the fleet workers live like slaves. "I went to work at 6 P. M. Tuesday and worked till 6 A. M. Wednesday. I had 45 minutes for dinner at midnight. I was working in the cement mixing plant. They fed us salt pork, corn bread, black-eyed peas and boiled apples. I got sick after eating it. I quit the next morning and I had a hard time getting my \$2.20. They pay \$3.20 but you have to pay \$1 for room and board. They

drive men just like they would a galley slave or just as they work convicts. There were four foremen and they would not let the men slow up at all."

Many of these government slaves are World War veterans and this is the "charity" or "chance to earn an honest dollar" that generous Uncle Sam is now offering. Charges are made by the men that hard boiled foremen on the revetment crew force laborers to work 10 to 13 hours a day, sleep on a hard floor at night, work in concrete up to their knees without boots and threaten them with shovels when they protest (Memphis Evening Appeal, August 12th.) Those who know anything about concrete know the serious nature of exposing the bare skin to its caustic action. The fact that the government does not furnish boots to protect the legs of the workers shows the crass disregard for these helpless war veterans.

## *What Will the Aristocrats of Labor Do?*

By J. B.

From about the first of June up until now the Reading railroad system has laid off three fourths of the workers outside of the transportation men. Transportation is the only solidly organized group on the Reading and the Brotherhoods regulate their own Boards, but with the rest the company does pretty much as they please.

The Transportation Brotherhoods in their present dilemma naturally enough lay off men only when it is next to impossible to carry them any longer. For instance last month there were men on the Firemen's and the Trainmen's extra board that did not get enough work to pay their relief association premiums.

On the Harrisburg Division, which is one of the smallest divisions on the Reading, if we go back to 1914 we find that with about the same tonnage freight in that year as last year they had 52 pool crews and about 25 regular assigned crews, not including the large Rutherford classified yard, the Harrisburg Industrial yard, and the Lebanon Industrial Yard. In the year 1914 an engineer on the Harrisburg division with a seniority dating as of 1907 would still have been on the extra board but not for long—at the most not longer than 1917 or 18.

Today that same engineer is either on the extra board or next to it. In other words, while he has been getting older in years he has gained nothing insofar

as stability of assignment is concerned, and this notwithstanding the company handled just as much tonnage freight in 1931 as in 1914.

Today there are no pool crews left because these pool crews always hauled the rough and bulky freight as it came into terminal and were always subject to call. Now on account of the tremendous size of the power this pool freight lays over in terminal to fill out the large power which hauls the preference freight. So today we find that the Railroad companies are hauling in tonnage almost as much as they did in 1914 and with two thirds less man-power.

## *Hot At It*

By FRED KOLE

The Smith Township Council of Unemployed — subject of the articles "Smith Township Gets Going" in August LABOR AGE—is hot at it with the trustees again. The relief men, eight hundred of them, walked off the job when their wages were cut from forty to thirty-two cents per hour. The trustees then threatened to shut off all relief unless the men went back to work under their tyrant-like demands. The president of the Council called a mass meeting in Sebring. He laid the facts before the men. If these things were to keep up they would soon be working for nothing. It was right for them to protest this action of the trustees. Still, if they went out on strike they would get no relief and what would their women and children do? They decided to go back to work—but—in the meantime a committee is to be formed and hurried down to Governor White. They will ask the immediate removal of all three township trustees from office—for the Smith Township Council of Unemployed has the goods on them. One of these men is operating a coal yard in conjunction with his trusteeship—selling coal for relief purposes. This is unlawful. Another is a member of the board of education, holding down two elective offices in the same township—also unlawful.

The Council got results from the governor before and there's no reason why they can't get them again. Sebring, Ohio

# Our Job

*From Statement of N.E.C. to the Convention*

**T**HE issue is, therefore, clearly and sharply drawn: Either the bankers, industrialists and politicians will set up a Fascist dictatorship in the U. S. or Labor must fight them, assume control and establish a sane and just economic order and a genuine workers' democracy. This issue does not belong to the future, but to the present. Whether Fascism or Labor will rule the destinies of this nation will be decided in the period upon which we are even now entering.

Are American workers and the American labor movement aware of the crisis and prepared to meet it?

The masses of American workers and farmers are certainly not yet fully aware of the problem with which they are confronted, nor possessed of the resources with which to solve it. The tradition of individualism still lingers to some degree. The high-powered propaganda of the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover era to the effect that America had developed a New Capitalism, under which American workers were immune from the forces that played upon the workers in other lands and would never again know poverty and unemployment, exerted a wide and deep influence. The effect has not altogether worn off and there are still those who think that in the U. S. luck and prosperity must be "around the corner." Moreover, American workers of the present generation have not been familiarized with fundamental political, social and economic issues and have no powerful economic or political organizations of their own. Consequently, even if they are disillusioned and resentful, they see no clear alternative to submission to existing conditions or if they do see an alternative, feel without adequate power to attain it. The result is a mood of apathy, sullenness, cynicism, rather than of revolutionary will and faith.

As for the American labor movement, in the fact of the present crisis, it is more confused and weak than at any time in the past fifty years. The trade union movement includes only a small percentage of the workers. For the most part it is beating a retreat and the leadership still supinely if not willingly follows the lead of big business, the bankers and the politicians of the old parties. It looks for favors

rather than being bent on building up labor's own power.

In the face of unparalleled opportunity and challenge the various political and theoretical organizations and groups have likewise failed. They have not united existing organizations nor fired the imagination of the unorganized masses for the battle to build a powerful front against capitalist forces. The criticisms leveled by the more vigorous elements in these parties and groups against their present policies and leadership, are themselves proof that none of them, at least, as now led and constituted, is an effective and satisfactory vanguard for American labor, an inspiring rallying center for responsible militant workers.

It is precisely this lack of an inspiring militant rallying center that constitutes the most alarming aspect of the present crisis in American labor and the most important concrete problem before this Convention. If the working masses of a nation are politically backward, they can be educated, sometimes under the pressure of conditions, with amazing rapidity. At this very moment, in struggles of the unemployed in various parts of the country, in strikes of farmers in such supposedly conservative agricultural sections as Iowa, Nebraska, Illinois and Wisconsin, in the renewed revolts of Southern textile workers, in the valiant struggle of Illinois miners against wage cuts, in the activities of the Bonus Expeditionary Force, in battles being waged by the rank and file in many unions against bureaucracy, corruption and gangsterism, we find abundant evidence of the militancy, courage and working-class intelligence latent in the American masses. A labor movement on its part may be stagnant, weak, corrupt, and yet be revived, revolutionized or replaced.

The natural militancy and courage of the masses go to waste, however, and a weak and degenerate labor movement cannot be reformed or removed, unless the active, devoted, militant spirits among the workers are effectively organized to give unity, coordination, leadership and inspiration to the masses and to mass organizations. If these militants are weak, divided, petty, visionless, then the situation is indeed dangerous. This need of a soundly organized militant rallying center we must supply, and without delay.

## "All Quiet on the Water Front"

(Continued from Page 18)

the present one expires. Although President Ryan of the International Longshoremen's Association is reported to have expressed himself as determinedly opposed to any wage cut, the shipowners have made no attempt to hide their hankering for lower wage standards. Already last winter, they demanded a voluntary wage cut, which was voted down unanimously by the members. Shortly after they forced a wage cut on the coastwise longshoremen, who had, unwisely, allowed their union to deteriorate and disintegrate.

It is up to the still active members of the union to arouse new interest for the union and its problems among their fellow workers, to make them feel again that after all it is their union and the only bulwark against encroachments upon their living standards by greedy employers, and that, if they wish to hold their own, they cannot afford to leave everything, their most vital interests, in the hands of a few leaders. This is certainly an appropriate time to begin regaining the members' interest in their union. The forward looking members must at once get in contact with each other in order to work systematically, not for the weakening or the destruction of the union, but for its strengthening and upbuilding and, above all, the regaining of the control of the union by the membership and the wiping out of all dictatorial powers within the organization.

### NOTICE!

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**LABOR AGE**

**128 East 16th Street,  
NEW YORK CITY**



# New Books . . .

## THE WORKER IN RUSSIA

"The Russian Worker," by Joseph Freeman. Liveright, Inc. New York. \$2.50.

**T**O understand Soviet Russia, remember that the workers overthrew the old government and established a workers' republic; and to judge Russia, see whether the change has helped the workers. It is from this point of view that Joseph Freeman has written "The Russian Worker."

And right away, reading the book, we discover that everything in that vast country of 160 million people is topsyturvy.

While the coming winter will find them working, building factories and model cities—a room for each member of a family, rent free or at a nominal cost—workers in the United States, most of them, will still be on vacation, part time or full time, diverting themselves with nightmares about evictions, breadlines and charity.

The author, of course, doesn't say it this way; what he has done is write a sober book of about 400 pages (result of a year's study in Russia) in which figures, statistics and facts show, among other things, that the aim of all Soviet labor legislation is to raise the living standards of the workers to the highest possible level; that the Russian work-day has been progressively reduced until it is the shortest in the world; and that as the hours are shortened the wages are steadily increased. He shows how it's done, tells all about the planned mass economy under a workers' government, and doesn't think it's funny.

But imagine how funny it would strike our money-making business men if they had to raise wages under circumstances like these—

"The law provides that the total number of hours which the worker puts in per month does not exceed the seven-hour limit—168 hours a month. During 1931 about 70 per cent of the workers were on the seven-hour day. During 1932 it is planned to have 92 per cent on the seven-hour day and under the Second Five-Year Plan it is intended to establish an average work-day of six hours for all workers."

The author makes it clear that planning under capitalism, where stock holders and profit motives are involved, is not the same, and can't be the same, as planning in the Soviet Union. The profit motive has first to be removed—in which

case capitalism would become something else—otherwise every plan is to make more money by LIMITING production. In Russia every plan is to increase production, and, since the workers prosper in proportion as production increases, there can be no overproduction, no depressions.

Under the Five-Year Plan the Soviet Union has strode forward swiftly.

"The volume of industrial production increased 86 per cent from 1928 to 1931, while the volume of production in the rest of the world declined 20 per cent... By August of 1931 the Soviet industrial production exceeded that of Germany and was second only to that of the United States."

This growth, however, would mean very little if it were not reflected in the lives of the workers. The test is the workers—how do they fare? It's their government, what are they doing with it, and are they better off than workers in capitalist countries?

The reader may judge:

"...By the end of 1931 the monthly income per family had increased 64 per cent as compared with 1929.... About 90 per cent of all wage earners are union members....they pay from 25 to 60 per cent less for all sorts of services.... Young workers, permitted a maximum working day of six hours, must be paid the same rate as adults doing the same work.... The Labor Code provides a six-hour day for miners, and guarantees an uninterrupted rest period of not less than 42 hours a week to all workers.... Every person who has worked at the job for five and a half months gets at least two weeks' vacation a year with full pay.... The minimum vacation for young workers and persons engaged in hard or dangerous work is one month with full pay.... Women receive the same pay as men....and are exempted from work eight weeks before confinement and eight weeks after confinement with full pay.... Compulsory state insurance for all workers is established by the Code....the funds must be contributed entirely by the employers.... No worker can be evicted.... Old age pensions.... In addition to a direct money wage the Soviet worker receives....free medical and dental service....free working clothes....rent, heat and light free or at a nominal cost...."

The book is thorough, lengthy, scholarly, not in the least sensational, and would probably be tough reading if not written about material naturally interesting. This makes it quite an exciting book.

TESS HUFF.

## HOW SHOULD LABOR VOTE?

How Should Labor Vote? By Katherine Pollak and David Saposs. No. 6 of the Brookwood Pamphlet Series. Brookwood, Katonah, N. Y. 15c.

Appearing as election campaigns get under way and on the heels of the latest (and as it seems weakest!) political fiat of the A. F. of L. Council, the sixth of the Brookwood Pamphlet Series "How Should Labor Vote," written by Katherine Pollak and edited by David Saposs, brings new clarity on an old problem to workers seeking political enlightenment.

This pamphlet discusses independent political action as against the non-partisan policy, showing up the inherent weaknesses of the latter, such as corruption, compromise, lack of militancy and divisiveness, and, by a tabulated analysis for the years 1924-31, its lack of any significant accomplishments.

The desirable alternative outlined and to which workers are now more than ever responding is a broad labor party, with solid foundations in working class elements, growing up side by side with their economic organizations, and distinct from a liberal or third party controlled by progressive politicians or middle class reformers.

The possibilities of unity, independent leadership responsible to the organized workers, vitality and inspiration in such a party are stressed. The argument that interest in politics dissipates energies for trade union activity is pointed out, with examples, to be unsound. On the other hand, the interdependence of the two activities is emphasized.

The pamphlet concludes with a brief reference to the relation of such a mass labor party to existing labor political groups. In this respect the title is perhaps misleading. The pamphlet does not suggest any immediate, practical steps towards labor political action, and the title remains unanswered except by implication. The question of political affiliations, now concerning many workers, is covered only by the following:

"It (a labor party) would aim to combine for common effort workers of all kinds regardless of certain differences of opinion. Although a number of political parties of workers are organized on a national scale, none of these at present is such a mass organization. . . . The labor party might well be a federation, containing within itself unions, political organizations and other organizations of workers which preserve their own identity. . . . Any groups that are willing to



accept labor's program and to cooperate sincerely in furthering it, would probably be welcomed and find a place within the mass organization."

This is brief and perhaps disappointingly vague to the harassed voter beset on all sides now by ardent campaigners. However, objectivity being one of the slogans of this series, Number 6 fits in better perhaps by refraining from an attempt to answer itself. As a text for worker's discussion groups, it covers the ground clearly, completely, and—the unique feature of this series—simply.

CARA COOK.

The other five pamphlets are, *What a Union Did for the Coal Miners*, 15c; *Important Union Methods*, 15c; *How a Trade Union Is Run*, 20c; *Our Labor Movement Today*, 35c; *Why Bother About the Government*, 10c. Set of six for \$1.00.—Editors.

## SPIES AND INJUNCTIONS

*Spying on Workers.* By Robert W. Dunn. *The Injunction Menace.* By Charlotte Todes. *International Pamphlets.* International Publishers. N. Y.

DUNN tells a story every worker can understand. Bosses don't want to pay decent wages. It's cheaper to hire rats who will report the names of militant workers and the internal affairs of unions, so that the former can be fired and the latter stamped out.

Sometimes the labor spy is an ordinary worker, who, for a few extra dollars, is willing to do the dirty work. Sometimes he belongs to an agency; he works in the factory where he is paid off like the other workers and is also paid by his agency which has a contract with the factory owner. The agencies get contracts by advertising that they can stamp out all radicalism and make the plant one big happy family. Sometimes to worry a prospective client they quietly stir up a little agitation in his factory. The client is then more likely to feel that he needs their services.

Of course a spy's first duties are to inform on shopmates and fellow unionists and to disrupt labor organizations. Sometimes this isn't enough. A strike may be organized. Then spying turns to killing. Thugs and strikebreakers are brought in; they are boozed up, armed, sworn in as deputy sheriffs and set to work provoking, attacking and even killing the strikers and their families.

This, in brief, is the story of the labor spy which Dunn tells. It's a good job, with one exception. Dunn correctly says that the only way to beat the spy system is to unite the workers, to build militant mass organizations and to oppose a

united working-class to boss terrorism. But he forgets to point out that those who break up working-class meetings, who send strikers back to work by weakening their morale through emphasis on fakers and sell-outs during the strike, who split unions and other workers' organizations, are not strengthening the working-class but weakening it; consciously or unconsciously they are helping the bosses; they are doing the work of the Labor Spy.

As the author of "The Injunction Menace" points out, injunctions make illegal every right that workers possess. Picketing, speaking, leaflet distribution are met with jail sentences. However, she neglects to emphasize the irony of impartial courts granting an injunction against workers lest they hurt an employer's business. Courts never dream of granting injunctions against bosses who by lay-offs and wage cuts hurt a worker's business. But then a worker's business is only to earn a living; it is not important.

In the food and needle trades A. F. of L. unions have taken out injunctions against the T.U.U.L. Active Socialists have often been the lawyers. The right wing food workers have settled with shops where the left wing has a strike, and then aided the boss to get an injunction against the left wing. On the other hand, and this Miss Todes fails to note, the Food Workers' Industrial Union often deliberately strikes shops signed by the A. F. of L. when workers there are earning more than in open shops in the neighborhood. The whole affair is a nasty one, growing of dual unionism, capitalist ideology which sees nothing wrong in using the boss courts against fellow workers, and sectarianism which puts party rivalries ahead of working-class unity and victory.

The recent anti-injunction law is shown by the author to be useless. It was passed by an anti-labor Congress, signed by the notorious Hoover, and is full of obvious loopholes. Miss Todes sees in the law an attempt on the part of the bosses to rehabilitate their pals the A. F. of L. leaders. Perhaps it was an attempt on the part of some Congressmen to win reelection.

Some statements by the author deserve special mention. For example, she says that among the miners, the National Miners Union bears the brunt of boss terror. What about Harlan where no one ever heard of the N.M.U. until months after the strike which was led by the I. W. W.? She says that only the Communist Party supports mass violation of injunctions. Has she heard of the campaign being carried on for some months now at the Apex Hosiery Mill in Philadelphia? Or at

the Dougherty silk mill last summer in Clifton, New Jersey?

LAWRENCE COHEN

## The Farm Strike

(Continued from Page 8)

highways were kept open for traffic. They insisted they would not interfere with "peaceful" picketing. But if any truck driver failed to be influenced by "peaceful" persuasion and insisted on going through the picket line he had but to appeal to the officers of the law and they would escort him through safely.

To date there have been almost no fatalities in this strike, though a few of the farmers have been wounded in their skirmishes with the officers of the law and hundreds of them have been arrested. Every day sees fresh recruits on the picket lines, more meetings held with a growing attendance and interest, enthusiasm rising to fever heat. As far as the general public is concerned the "farm holiday" as the strike is generally called is crowding prohibition off the map and off the front pages of the press. So far the concentration spots of strike activity have been Sioux City, Council Bluffs and Omaha. As the movement grows other cities will draw the attention of the strikers.

Milo Reno says that the aim of the strike is to secure economic justice for the farmer. He says further, "For 12 long, weary years we had petitioned Congress to correct a deflated situation in agriculture only to be refused. Promises were made only to be broken, until finally the farmer, discouraged, broken-hearted and bankrupt, has come to realize that he is at the parting of the ways and that if his rights as an American citizen and an independent owner and operator of a farm are restored it will be by and through his own efforts."

As far back as 1927 the Corn Belt Committee, a group of men selected by the major farm organizations of America met in Des Moines and passed the following resolution: "If we cannot obtain justice by legislation, the time will have arrived when no other course remains than organized refusal to deliver the products of the farm at less than production costs."

Evidently the farmers of the Middle West have concluded that the arrival of the summer of 1932 marks the end of depending upon the unreliable promises of politicians, and marks the beginning of their determination to take matters into their own hands.



## Storm Over Europe

(Continued from page 17)

East Prussia, constitute another group. Their mass support comes from the middle class whose capitalist ideology has not disappeared along with its small property holdings,—swept ruthlessly into the great non-owning class but clinging stubbornly to the ideas of a system in which they held an uncertain tenure of privilege. In addition to these elements it is noteworthy that the student group of Germany has rallied solidly under the banner of Fascism. It is estimated by careful observers that 90 per cent of the students are Fascist sympathizers with as many as 25 per cent actually enrolled in Hitler's storm troops. This latter phenomenon can be explained only on the assumption of the essentially class character of German education, the privileges of which have not been proportionately available to proletarian youth in these times of greatly depressed standards of living. In Germany there is also a marked tendency for religion to follow the lines of political parties, the Nazis being the party of the Protestants.

The Catholic Centrists, of which ex-Chancellor Bruening is the leader, are scarcely less capitalistic than the Nazis. They have announced tonight their readiness to form a coalition cabinet with the Nazis. It is highly doubtful, however, that the Reichstag when it convenes the end of this month will be able to support any kind of coalition government.

1932, then, has witnessed the definite end of an epoch in post-war Germany. It has seen the end of parliamentarianism and the commencement of a highly accentuated class war.

### A NEW PUBLICATION

Sponsored by the International Group of Oakland and San Francisco. MAN, "a Journal of the Anarchist Ideal and its Movement" will appear in November, 1932. It will be edited by Marcus Graham who compiled and edited "An Anthology of Revolutionary Poetry."

Subscription to MAN will be free. It will be sent to any individual or library upon request. It will not carry any paid advertisements. Its existence will depend solely upon the voluntary contributions of its readers.

Essays, stories, poems and drawings of a libertarian nature will always be welcome.

All correspondence should be addressed to: Marcus Graham, 1000 Jefferson Street, Oakland, Calif., U. S. A.

## The Negro's Road To Freedom

(Continued from Page 13)

principles, and who have allowed these tenets to become operative in their own lives. This type of leader will be morally, intellectually and practically qualified to present CPLA to Negro workers just as he or she will be eminently qualified to present the program to other racial groups. This is the only type of worker that will develop the ability to adapt the program of CPLA on the field, to the Negro worker in relationship to the white worker and to the community, and at the same time hold to the basic philosophy, and push on to the goal of a workers' commonwealth that will include all workers of every creed, race and color.

I have purposely refrained from any extended recommendations concerning technique for the reason that I do not and could not know what to recommend in a detailed way. This is a matter that should be developed in conferences and before the workers. Discussion, frank and honest and then application of the results of the discussions on the field should be the rule and I believe the only rule worth laying down.

It is perhaps needless to add that the

Negro's road to freedom, I believe, lies in the road set down by the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, just as I believe that this is the white worker's road to freedom; the white and black worker indissolubly bound up together to achieve a workers' republic managed by all the workers for all the workers.

### THE MEANING OF THE CONVENTION

(Continued from Page 5)

sane social order, political or otherwise, will avail unless a realistic, fighting, intelligent labor movement is developed. This job CPLA is doing right down among the workers on the industrial battle front, where the rank and file workers are up against the toughest kind of fight, day in and day out. They must be supported in that struggle. Nowhere is help more needed, nowhere does it count for more.

Above all, we invited all militant workers, regardless of their previous affiliations, to join us in the tremendous task which we have undertaken. The job cannot be done by a handful of militant workers, no matter how devoted, in one section of the country. Let militants all over the land, from every industry, stand solidly together. The CPLA is on the march!

## The MODERN QUARTERLY

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